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Gershom Carmichael

PARADISE REGAINED

AND

SAMSON AGONISTES

BY

JOHN MILTON

NEW YORK
THE MERSHON COMPANY
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INTRODUCTION.

MILTON'S "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" were published together as a single volume in the year 1671, when his age was sixty-three, and he was within three or four years of his death. He died on the 8th of November, 1674.

"Paradise Lost" had, as we have seen, its issue in a Paradise to be regained, happier far than the outward Eden. The regained Paradise would be within the man who should attain the sum of wisdom in obedience and love to God; in faith, in virtue, patience, temperance, and

> "love
> By name to come called charity, the soul
> Of all the rest."

That was the last consolation of the Angel who led Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden into

the world where they still had "Providence their guide." Christ was to be the great example. By imitation of Christ, lost happiness would be restored, "and Eden raised in the waste wilderness." "Paradise Regained" is, in fact, Milton's "Imitatio Christi." He takes the narrative of the Temptation in the Wilderness, so treats it that it shall express all the chief temptations that beset the soul of man, and gives to each its remedy by setting forth how it is to be met in the spirit of Christ. A patient trust in God is the prevailing note throughout the poem. In the whole book containing "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" there is the same motive throughout. They were dark times in 1671 for men who had expected in old Commonwealth days to see the cause of God advanced by ways of their own fashioning, and now found, as it seemed to them, the people of God delivered captive to the Philistines. The simple spiritual lesson, "Rest in the

Lord, and wait patiently for Him," is breathed throughout "Paradise Regained," as from the lips of Christ. The same teaching is applied directly, by a Scripture tale, to the position of those who had shared Milton's hopes, and with whom he did not now share their despair. Samson might be taken as type of "the Good Old Cause" fallen and triumphed over by the Philistines. Let them remember Samson enslaved, "eyeless in Gaza," waiting patiently till God shall in His own way fulfil His purposes. The whole volume, which closed the work of Milton as a poet, sought to inspire, in times that might tempt many to despair, a patient fearless confidence in God.

No eyes of man in 1671 were able to pierce the darkness that had settled over all the land. In January, 1669, Charles II. opened negotiations with Louis XIV. that had in view the destruction of free Holland, whom the Triple Alliance of a year before had adopted as our national ally against the

despotism of the King of France. They had in view also the re-establishment of Catholicism in England, and the King of England was to be paid by the King of France £200,000 a year, and to be supported by six thousand French troops in overcoming the resistance of his people. The secret Treaty of Dover which had such ends in view was signed on the 20th of May, 1670. The King did hurry on an unnatural war with Holland, which was publicly declared in 1672, but he flinched from the dangers associated with an endeavour to re-establish Roman Catholicism, and left the carrying out of that part of the compact to be afterwards attempted by his brother James. In the year of the publication of "Paradise Regained," on the 2nd of April, Charles II. prorogued Parliament, and governed then without a Parliament for the next twenty-one months. The King raised money by suspending payments of more than a million due from the Exchequer. His profligacy and

that of his chosen companions was a common scandal. John Bunyan was in prison; he was released a year later with others, and then only by the general operation of an arbitrary Declaration of Indulgence.

In "Paradise Regained" the epic treatment of the theme is subdued in every feature to the tone of its main thought. Wealth of imagery and pomp of diction are carefully avoided, most carefully in the passage designed to express most directly the patient faith of Christ. In "Paradise Lost" there was a Temptation and a Fall. In "Paradise Regained" there is a Temptation and a Victory, foreshadowed in the opening lines of "Paradise Lost," which was to tell of

> "loss of Eden, till one greater Man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful seat."

After a statement of the subject and the invocation of the Spirit of God that led this glorious

eremite into the desert, Milton opens his poem with the baptism of Christ, and the voice from Heaven heard by Satan, who then summoned his council in the clouds, for since the Fall, according to old church tradition, the evil spirits have their dwelling in the clouds and in the darkness near to man. He declares in a speech his purpose to tempt, though with a prospect of success less sure than when he tempted Adam. With dismay at his tidings the evil spirits commit to him the whole care of the enterprise, and Satan approaches the coast of Jordan, as in "Paradise Lost," after the great council in Pandemonium, he crossed Chaos in search of the new-created world. Here also before the Temptation is begun the eternal counsels of God are declared in Heaven, the triumph of good is foreshown, and the angels sing their hymn of "victory and triumph to the Son of God." Thus far, in the relation of the parts to one another, the miniature epic exactly corresponds

with "Paradise Lost," but all is reduced in scale and set to a new music.

Led by the Spirit while intent in meditation of the work to which He has been called, Christ enters the wilderness, and His calm thoughts recalling what has happened to him serve as episode of the past, which is completed afterwards by incidents recalled in the pure mind of his mother Mary. Then after the forty days in the desert, Satan appears as an old man, addresses Christ with hypocrisy and with temptation to doubt.

"To whom the Son of God: 'Who brought me hither,
Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek.'"

Satan still tempts to doubt, and is still answered with calm faith in God and knowledge of the tempter. Then Satan acknowledges himself, but claims to be able to love what is good, and to help man with oracles. This draws rebuke from Christ

in answer to which the fiend dissembles, and there is put into his mouth the excuse for falsehood that has risen in the heart of many a tempted man :—

> "Where
> Easily canst thou find one miserable,
> And not enforced oft-times to part from truth,
> If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
> Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?"

He asks for access, that he may talk at least with Christ :

> "To whom our Saviour, with unaltered brow :
> 'Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
> I bid not, or forbid ; do as thou find'st
> Permission from above ; thou canst not more.'"

The Second Book opens with Jesus sought in vain by Andrew and Simon, and we are told in soft music how—

> on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
> Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play,
> Plain fishermen (no greater men them call),

Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and plaints outbreathed.

The doubts are only expressed that they may close in the pervading note of faith, "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." Let us

"all our fears
Lay on his providence; He will not fail
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence.
Soon we shall see our hope, our joy, return."

Next follow Mary's troubled thoughts (which complete the episode of the past in simplest form); and these also lead to their close in the repeated note of faith, as she

"with thoughts
Meekly composed awaited the fulfilling."

Then the poem reverts to Christ in the Wilderness and Satan, who returns discomfited to his council of evil spirits in the clouds, and asks the help of all. Here Milton (who, in the temptation

of Christ, is figuring the temptations that beset a Christian) skilfully introduces into his "Imitatio Christi" one that could not be overlooked in the world of Charles II.'s time, but was not and could not be made an incident of Christ's temptation in the Wilderness. Milton represents Belial "the dissolutest spirit that fell, the sensualest;" counselling at large, "Set women in his eye," and the suggestion scornfully repelled by Satan himself. But Satan returns to tempt, with the evil spirits to assist him, and relies first on the temptation—great indeed it is to us—of hunger and want. Christ feels hunger, and the hunger prompts his dreams; but every dream is an expression of his rest upon the Providence of God. Then waking, he ascends a hill and sees a pleasant grove below, descends to it, and finds a table sumptuously spread by Satan in the Wilderness. His temperate faith resists every allurement. Satan can show man how to rise from poverty to wealth:—

"They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain ;
While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want."

In an hour of such temptation, let the man, impatient of distress, read in this "Imitatio Christi" how "Jesus patiently replied."

The Third Book opens with desire of glory as the next temptation of the Man who shows how man must shape his thoughts if he would raise within himself a Paradise far happier than Eden. Then in the name of zeal and duty Satan urges that the throne of David is to be His, but that He must make haste to secure it. But the answer is,

"All things are best fulfilled in their due time.
. . . . . .
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
Can suffer, best can do."

The powers of the world are shown alliance with one of which will win victory, and Christ sets aside unmoved "that cumbersome Luggage of war, . . . argument Of human weakness rather than of strength." For the strength of a man is in his mind; his victories are of that part in him which is in the image of God. His weakness is in devices for the aggravation of brute force, which make him but a greater beast. So Milton understood "luggage of war" as "argument of human weakness rather than of strength." "For what," he had asked, "can war but endless war still breed?"

In the Fourth Book the temptation rises, and its climax is temptation through the intellect. In the answer to this form of temptation occurs the thought which Sir Isaac Newton, who knew his Milton, repeated, and which readers who do not know their Milton suppose to be Sir Isaac Newton's. Milton represents the man

"Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
As children gathering pebbles on the shore."

There is no enticement left, only the temptation through fear.

"Since neither wealth nor honour, arms nor arts,
Kingdom or empire pleases thee, nor aught
By me proposed in life contemplative
Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
What dost thou in this world?"

The terrors of hell next encompass him, and so the poem passes to its closing triumph of the Saviour, who

"by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regained lost Paradise."

In "Samson Agonistes" a Scripture story is treated in the manner of the old Greek dramatists, developed as a story and not turned into a myth. But it is a story shaped as an example to those who would doubt, in evil times, God's presence in

the life of man. The great chorus in the middle of the play, "God of our fathers! what is man?" is designed for a full utterance of the questioning, to which the whole play is an answer. It includes even among the apparent contradictions the remembrance that the poet himself, temperate from his youth up, was being killed by a disease—gout—which is commonly the "punishment of dissolute dogs." He refers directly to the disgrace and failure fallen upon men who had sought with high endeavour to serve God and to advance His kingdom. All this is set forth distinctly and fearlessly, and is answered by the action of the drama, which leads to the closing chorus.

"All is best, though we oft doubt
What the unsearchable dispose
Of Highest Wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns,
And to his faithful champion hath in place

Bore witness gloriously ; whence Gaza mourns,
And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent :
His servants he, with new acquist
Of true experience, from this great event,
With peace and consolation hath dismissed,
And calm of mind, all passion spent."

These words, enforcing quiet faith in evil times, were the last words of Milton as a poet. We are now far enough from the year 1671 to know that his faith was justified. The very conditions that seemed to afford grounds of despair were those which were most powerful to bring about an easy solution of what seemed to be an insoluble problem. Only seventeen years after these words of faith were uttered, they were justified by the Revolution of 1688.

H. M.

PARADISE REGAINED.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE subject proposed. Invocation of the Holy Spirit. The poem opens with John baptising at the river Jordan Jesus coming there is baptised; and is attested, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and by a voice from heaven, to be the Son of God. Satan, who is present, upon this immediately flies up into the regions of the air: where, summoning his infernal council, he acquaints them with his apprehensions that Jesus is that seed of the woman destined to destroy all their power, and points out to them the immediate necessity of bringing the matter to proof, and of attempting, by snares and fraud, to counteract and defeat the person from whom they have so much to dread. This office he offers himself to undertake; and, his offer being accepted, sets out on his enterprise. In the meantime, God, in the assembly of holy angels, declares that he has given up his Son to be tempted by Satan but foretells that the tempter shall be completely defeated by him: upon which the angels sing a hymn of triumph. Jesus is led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, while he is meditating on the commencement of his great office of Saviour of mankind. Pursuing his meditations, he narrates, in a soliloquy, what divine and philanthropic impulses he had felt from his early youth, and how his mother, Mary, on perceiving these dispositions in him, had acquainted him with the circumstances of his birth, and informed him that he was no less a person than the Son of

God; to which he adds what his own reflections and inquiries had supplied in confirmation of this great truth, and particularly dwells on the recent attestation of it at the river Jordan. Our Lord passes forty days, fasting, in the wilderness; where the wild beasts become mild and harmless in his presence. Satan now appears under the form of an old peasant; and enters into discourse with our Lord, wondering what could have brought him alone into so dangerous a place, and at the same time professing to recognise him for the person lately acknowledged by John, at the river Jordan, to be the Son of God. Jesus briefly replies. Satan rejoins with a description of the difficulty of supporting life in the wilderness; and entreats Jesus, if he be really the Son of God, to manifest his divine power, by changing some of the stones into bread. Jesus reproves him, and at the same time tells him that he knows who he is. Satan instantly avows himself, and offers an artful apology for himself and his conduct. Our blessed Lord severely reprimands him, and confutes every part of his justification. Satan, with much semblance of humility, still endeavours to justify himself; and, professing his admiration of Jesus, and his regard for virtue, requests to be permitted at a future time to hear more of his conversation; but is answered, that this must be as he shall find permission from above. Satan then disappears, and the book closes with a short description of night coming on in the desert.

I, WHO erewhile the happy garden sung
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recovered Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried
Through all temptation, and the tempter foiled
In all his wiles, defeated and repulsed,

And Eden raised in the waste wilderness.
Thou Spirit, who ledd'st this glorious eremite
Into the desert, his victorious field,
Against the spiritual foe, and brought'st him thence
By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute,
And bear through height or depth of nature's bounds,
With prosperous wing full summed, to tell of deeds
Above heroic, though in secret done,
And unrecorded left through many an age;
Worthy to have not remained so long unsung.
Now had the great proclaimer, with a voice
More awful than the sound of trumpet, cried
Repentance, and heaven's kingdom nigh at hand
To all baptised: to his great baptism flocked
With awe the regions round, and with them came
From Nazareth the son of Joseph deemed
To the flood Jordan; came, as then obscure,
Unmarked, unknown; but him the Baptist soon
Descried, divinely warned, and witness bore
As to his worthier, and would have resigned
To him his heavenly office; nor was long
His witness unconfirmed: on him baptised
Heaven opened, and in likeness of a dove

The Spirit descended, while the Father's voice
From heaven pronounced him his beloved Son.
That heard the adversary, who, roving still
About the world, at that assembly famed
Would not be last, and, with the voice divine
Nigh thunder-struck, the exalted man, to whom
Such high attest was given, awhile surveyed
With wonder; then, with envy fraught and rage,
Flies to his place, nor rests, but in mid air
To council summons all his mighty peers,
Within thick clouds and dark tenfold involved,
A gloomy consistory; and then amidst,
With looks aghast and sad, he thus bespake:
"O ancient powers of air, and this wide world
(For much more willingly I mention air,
This our old conquest, than remember hell,
Our hated habitation); well ye know
How many ages, as the years of men,
This universe we have possessed, and ruled,
In manner at our will, the affairs of earth,
Since Adam and his facile consort Eve
Lost Paradise, deceived by me; though since
With dread attending when that fatal wound
Shall be inflicted by the seed of Eve
Upon my head. Long the decrees of Heaven

Delay, for longest time to him is short;
And now, too soon for us, the circling hours
This dreaded time have compassed, wherein we
Must bide the stroke of that long-threatened wound
(At least, if so we can, and, by the head
Broken, be not intended all our power
To be infringed, our freedom and our being,
In this fair empire won of earth and air):
For this ill news I bring, the woman's Seed
Destined to this, is late of woman born:
His birth to our just fear gave no small cause;
But his growth now to youth's full flower, displaying
All virtue, grace, and wisdom to achieve
Things highest, greatest, multiplies my fear.
Before him a great prophet, to proclaim
His coming, is sent harbinger, who all
Invites, and in the consecrated stream
Pretends to wash off sin, and fit them, so
Purified, to receive him pure, or rather
To do him honour as their King: all come,
And he himself among them was baptised;
Not thence to be more pure, but to receive
The testimony of Heaven, that who he is
Thenceforth the nations may not doubt. I saw

The prophet do him reverence; on him, rising
Out of the water, heaven above the clouds
Unfold her crystal doors; thence on his head
A perfect dove descend (whate'er it meant),
And out of heaven the sovereign voice I heard,
'This is my Son beloved,—in him am pleased.'
His mother then is mortal, but his Sire
He who obtains the monarchy of heaven:
And what will he not do to advance his Son?
His first-begot we know, and sore have felt,
When his fierce thunder drove us to the deep.
Who this is we must learn, for man he seems
In all his lineaments, though in his face
The glimpses of his Father's glory shine.
Ye see our danger on the utmost edge
Of hazard, which admits no long debate,
But must with something sudden be opposed
(Not force, but well-couched fraud, well-woven snares),
Ere in the head of nations he appear,
Their king, their leader, and supreme on earth.
I, when no other durst, sole undertook
The dismal expedition, to find out
And ruin Adam; and the exploit performed
Successfully: a calmer voyage now

Will waft me; and the way, found prosperous
once,
Induces best to hope of like success."
He ended, and his words impression left
Of much amazement to the infernal crew,
Distracted and surprised with deep dismay
At these sad tidings; but no time was then
For long indulgence to their fears or grief:
Unanimous they all commit the care
And management of this main enterprise
To him, their great dictator, whose attempt
At first against mankind so well had thrived
In Adam's overthrow, and led their march
From hell's deep-vaulted den to dwell in light,
Regents, and potentates, and kings, yea, gods,
Of many a pleasant realm and province wide.
So to the coast of Jordan he directs
His easy steps, girded with snaky wiles,
Where he might likeliest find this new-declared,
This man of men, attested Son of God,
Temptation and all guile on him to try;
So to subvert whom he suspected raised
To end his reign on earth, so long enjoyed:
But, contrary, unweeting he fulfilled
The purposed counsel, pre-ordained and fixed,

Of the Most High; who, in full frequence bright
Of angels, thus to Gabriel smiling spake:
"Gabriel, this day by proof thou shalt behold,
Thou and all angels conversant on earth
With man or men's affairs, how I begin
To verify that solemn message, late
On which I sent thee to the virgin pure
In Galilee, that she should bear a son,
Great in renown, and called the Son of God:
Then told'st her, doubting how these things could be
To her a virgin, that on her should come
The Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest
O'ershadow her. This man, born and now upgrown,
To show him worthy of his birth divine
And high prediction, henceforth I expose
To Satan; let him tempt, and now assay
His utmost subtlety, because he boasts
And vaunts of his great cunning to the throng
Of his apostasy; he might have learnt
Less overweening, since he failed in Job,
Whose constant perseverance overcame
Whate'er his cruel malice could invent.
He now shall know I can produce a man,

Of female seed, far abler to resist
All his solicitations, and at length
All his vast force, and drive him back to hell;
Winning, by conquest, what the first man lost,
By fallacy surprised. But first I mean
To exercise him in the wilderness;
There he shall first lay down the rudiments
Of his great warfare, ere I send him forth
To conquer Sin and Death, the two grand foes,
By humiliation and strong sufferance:
His weakness shall o'ercome Satanic strength,
And all the world, and mass of sinful flesh;
That all the angels and ethereal powers,
They now, and men hereafter, may discern,
From what consummate virtue I have chose
This perfect man, by merit called my Son,
To earn salvation for the sons of men."

So spake the Eternal Father, and all heaven
Admiring stood a space; then into hymns
Burst forth, and in celestial measures moved,
Circling the throne and singing, while the hand
Sung with the voice, and this the argument:

"Victory and triumph to the Son of God,
Now entering his great duel, not of arms,
But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles!

The Father knows the Son : therefore secure
Ventures his filial virtue, though untried,
Against whate'er may tempt, whate'er seduce,
Allure, or terrify, or undermine.
Be frustrate, all ye stratagems of hell,
And, devilish machinations, come to naught!"
So they in heaven their odes and vigils tuned:
Meanwhile the Son of God, who yet some days
Lodged in Bethabara, where John baptised,
Musing, and much revolving in his breast,
How best the mighty work he might begin
Of Saviour to mankind, and which way first
Publish his god-like office now mature,
One day forth walked alone, the Spirit leading,
And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
With solitude, till, far from track of men,
Thought following thought, and step by step led on
He entered now the bordering desert wild,
And, with dark shades and rocks environed round,
His holy meditations thus pursued :
"O, what a multitude of thoughts at once
Awakened in me swarm, while I consider
What from within I feel myself, and hear
What from without comes often to my ears,
Ill sorting with my present state compared!

When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be public good; myself I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things: therefore, above my years,
The law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection, that, ere yet my age
Had measured twice six years, at our great feast
I went into the temple, there to hear
The teachers of our law, and to propose
What might improve my knowledge or their own;
And was admired by all: yet this not all
To which my spirit aspired; victorious deeds
Flamed in my heart, heroic acts; one while
To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke;
Then to subdue and quell, o'er all the earth,
Brute violence and proud tyrannic power,
Till truth were freed, and equity restored:
Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first
By winning words to conquer willing hearts
And make persuasion do the work of fear;
At least to try, and teach the erring soul,
Not wilfully misdoing, but unaware

Misled; the stubborn only to subdue.
These growing thoughts my mother soon perceiving,
By words at times cast forth, inly rejoiced,
And said to me apart, 'High are thy thoughts,
O son, but nourish them, and let them soar
To what height sacred virtue and true worth
Can raise them, though above example high;
By matchless deeds express thy matchless Sire,
For know, thou art no son of mortal man,
Though men esteem thee low of parentage;
Thy father is the eternal King who rules
All heaven and earth, angels and sons of men;
A messenger from God foretold thy birth
Conceived in me a virgin; he foretold
Thou shouldst be great, and sit on David's throne,
And of thy kingdom there should be no end.
At thy nativity, a glorious quire
Of angels, in the fields of Bethlehem, sung
To shepherds, watching at their folds by night,
And told them the Messiah now was born,
Where they might see him, and to thee they came
Directed to the manger where thou lay'st,
For in the inn was left no better room.
A star, not seen before, in heaven appearing,
Guided the wise men thither from the east,

To honour thee with incense, myrrh, and gold;
By whose bright course led on they found the place,
Affirming it thy star, new-graven in heaven,
By which they knew the King of Israel born.
Just Simeon and prophetic Anna, warned
By vision, found thee in the temple, and spake,
Before the altar and the vested priest,
Like things of thee to all that present stood.'
"This having heard, straight I again revolved
The law and prophets, searching what was writ
Concerning the Messiah, to our scribes
Known partly, and soon found, of whom they spake
I am; this chiefly, that my way must lie
Through many a hard assay, even to the death,
Ere I the promised kingdom can attain,
Or work redemption for mankind, whose sins'
Full weight must be transferred upon my head.
Yet, neither thus disheartened, nor dismayed,
The time prefixed I waited; when behold
The Baptist (of whose birth I oft had heard,
Not knew by sight), now come, who was to come
Before Messiah, and his way prepare!
I, as all others, to his baptism came,

Which I believed was from above; but he
Straight knew me, and with loudest voice proclaimed
Me him (for it was shown him so from heaven),
Me him, whose harbinger he was; and first
Refused on me his baptism to confer,
As much his greater, and was hardly won:
But, as I rose out of the laving stream,
Heaven opened her eternal doors, from whence
The Spirit descended on me like a dove;
And last, the sum of all, my Father's voice,
Audibly heard from heaven, pronounced me his,
Me his beloved Son, in whom alone
He was well pleased; by which I knew the time
Now full, that I no more should live obscure;
But openly begin, as best becomes,
The authority which I derived from heaven.
And now by some strong motion I am led
Into this wilderness, to what intent
I learn not yet: perhaps I need not know;
For what concerns my knowledge God reveals."
So spake our Morning Star, then in his rise,
And, looking round, on every side beheld
A pathless desert, dusk with horrid shades;
The way he came not having marked, return

Was difficult, by human steps untrod;
And he still on was led, but with such thoughts
Accompanied of things past and to come
Lodged in his breast, as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.
Full forty days he passed, whether on hill
Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
Under the covert of some ancient oak,
Or cedar, to defend him from the dew,
Or harboured in one cave, is not revealed;
Nor tasted human food nor hunger felt,
Till those days ended; hungered then at last
Among wild beasts: they at his sight grew mild,
Nor sleeping him nor waking harmed; his walk
The fiery serpent fled and noxious worm,
The lion and fierce tiger glared aloof.
But now an aged man in rural weeds,
Following, as seemed, the quest of some stray ewe,
Or withered sticks to gather, which might serve
Against a winter's day, when winds blow keen,
To warm him wet returned from field at eve,
He saw approach, who first with curious eye
Perused him, then with words thus uttered spake:
"Sir, what ill chance hath brought thee to this
place,

So far from path or road of men, who pass
In troop or caravan? for single none
Durst ever, who returned, and dropt not here
His carcass, pined with hunger and with drought.
I ask the rather, and the more admire,
For that to me thou seem'st the man, whom late
Our new baptising prophet at the ford
Of Jordan honoured so, and called thee Son
Of God: I saw and heard, for we sometimes
Who dwell this wild, constrained by want, come forth
To town or village nigh (nighest is far),
Where aught we hear, and curious are to hear,
What happens new; fame also finds us out."
To whom the Son of God: "Who brought me hither,
Will bring me hence; no other guide I seek."
"By miracle he may," replied the swain;
"What other way I see not; for we here
Live on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inured
More than the camel, and to drink go far,
Men to much misery and hardship born:
But, if thou be the Son of God, command
That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;
So shalt thou save thyself, and us relieve

With food whereof we wretched seldom taste."
He ended, and the Son of God replied:
"Thinkst thou such force in bread? Is it not written
(For I discern thee other than thou seem'st),
Man lives not by bread only, but each word
Proceeding from the mouth of God, who fed
Our fathers here with manna; in the mount
Moses was forty days, nor ate, nor drank:
And forty days Elijah, without food,
Wandered this barren waste; the same I now:
Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?"
Whom thus answered the arch-fiend, now undisguised:
"'Tis true, I am that spirit unfortunate,
Who, leagued with millions more in rash revolt,
Kept not my happy station, but was driven
With them from bliss to the bottomless deep;
Yet to that hideous place not so confined
By rigour unconniving, but that oft,
Leaving my dolorous prison, I enjoy
Large liberty to round this globe of earth,
Or range in the air; nor from the heaven of heavens

Hath he excluded my resort sometimes.
I came among the sons of God, when he
Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job,
To prove him, and illustrate his high worth;
And, when to all his angels he proposed
To draw the proud king Ahab into fraud,
That he might fall in Ramoth, they demurring,
I undertook that office, and the tongues
Of all his flattering prophets glibbed with lies
To his destruction, as I had in charge;
For what he bids I do. Though I have lost
Much lustre of my native brightness, lost
To be beloved of God, I have not lost
To love, at least contemplate and admire,
What I see excellent in good, or fair,
Or virtuous; I should so have lost all sense:
What can be then less in me than desire
To see thee, and approach thee, whom I know
Declared the Son of God, to hear attent
Thy wisdom, and behold thy godlike deeds?
Men generally think me much a foe
To all mankind: why should I? they to me
Never did wrong or violence: by them
I lost not what I lost, rather by them
I gained what I have gained, and with them dwell,

Copartner in these regions of the world,
If not disposer; lend them oft my aid,
Oft my advice by presages and signs,
And answers, oracles, portents, and dreams,
Whereby they may direct their future life.
Envy they say excites me, thus to gain
Companions of my misery and woe.
At first it may be; but long since with woe
Nearer acquainted, now I feel, by proof,
That fellowship in pain divides not smart,
Nor lightens aught each man's peculiar load.
Small consolation then, were man adjoined:
This wounds me most (what can it less?), that man,
Man fallen, shall be restored; I never more."
To whom our Saviour sternly thus replied:
"Deservedly thou grievest, composed of lies
From the beginning, and in lies wilt end;
Who boast'st release from hell, and leave to come
Into the heaven of heavens: thou comest indeed,
As a poor miserable captive thrall
Comes to the place where he before had sat
Among the prime in splendour, now deposed,
Ejected, emptied, gazed, unpitied, shunned,
A spectacle of ruin, or of scorn,
To all the host of heaven; the happy place

Imparts to thee no happiness, no joy;
Rather inflames thy torment: representing
Lost bliss, to thee no more communicable,
So never more in hell than when in heaven.
But thou art serviceable to heaven's King.
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?
What but thy malice moved thee to misdeem
Of righteous Job, then cruelly to afflict him
With all inflictions? but his patience won.
The other service was thy chosen task,
To be a liar in four hundred mouths;
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.
Yet thou pretend'st to truth; all oracles
By thee are given, and what confessed more true
Among the nations? that hath been thy craft,
By mixing somewhat true to vent more lies.
But what have been thy answers, what but dark,
Ambiguous, and with double sense deluding,
Which they who asked have seldom understood,
And, not well understood, as good not known?
Who ever by consulting at thy shrine
Returned the wiser, or the more instruct,
To fly or follow what concerned him most,
And run not sooner to his fatal snare?

For God hath justly given the nations up
To thy delusions; justly, since they fell
Idolatrous; but, when his purpose is
Among them to declare his providence
To thee not known, whence hast thou then thy truth,
But from him, or his angels president
In every province, who, themselves disdaining
To approach thy temples, give thee in command
What, to the smallest tittle, thou shalt say
To thy adorers? Thou, with trembling fear,
Or like a fawning parasite, obey'st:
Then to thyself ascrib'st the truth foretold.
But this thy glory shall be soon retrenched;
No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
The Gentiles; henceforth oracles are ceased,
And thou no more with pomp and sacrifice
Shalt be inquired at Delphos, or elsewhere;
At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
God hath now sent his living oracle
Into the world to teach his final will;
And sends his Spirit of truth henceforth to dwell
In pious hearts, an inward oracle
To all truth requisite for men to know."
So spake our Saviour; but the subtle fiend

Though inly stung with anger and disdain,
Dissembled, and this answer smooth returned:
"Sharply thou hast insisted on rebuke,
And urged me hard with doings, which not will,
But misery hath wrested from me. Where
Easily canst thou find one miserable,
And not enforced oft-times to part from truth,
If it may stand him more in stead to lie,
Say and unsay, feign, flatter, or abjure?
But thou art placed above me, thou art Lord;
From thee I can, and must, submiss, endure
Check or reproof, and glad to 'scape so quit.
Hard are the ways of truth, and rough to walk,
Smooth on the tongue discoursed, pleasing to the ear,
And tunable as sylvan pipe or song;
What wonder then if I delight to hear
Her dictates from thy mouth? Most men admire
Virtue, who follow not her lore: permit me
To hear thee when I come (since no man comes),
And talk at least, though I despair to attain.
Thy Father, who is holy, wise, and pure,
Suffers the hypocrite or atheous priest
To tread his sacred courts, and minister
About his altar, handling holy things,

Praying or vowing : and vouchsafed his voice
To Balaam reprobate, a prophet yet
Inspired : disdain not such access to me."
To whom our Saviour, with unaltered brow :
"Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope,
I bid not, or forbid ; do as thou find'st
Permission from above ; thou canst not more."
He added not ; and Satan, bowing low
His gray dissimulation, disappeared
Into thin air diffused : for now began
Night with her sullen wings to double-shade
The desert ; fowls in their clay nests were couched ;
And now wild beasts came forth the woods to roam.

BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

The disciples of Jesus, uneasy at his long absence, reason amongst themselves concerning it. Mary also gives vent to her maternal anxiety; in the expression of which she recapitulates many circumstances respecting the birth and early life of her Son. Satan again meets his infernal council, reports the bad success of his first temptation of our blessed Lord, and calls upon them for counsel and assistance. Belial proposes the tempting of Jesus with women. Satan rebukes Belial for his dissoluteness, charging on him all the profligacy of that kind ascribed by the poets to the heathen gods, and rejects his proposal as in no respect likely to succeed. Satan then suggests other modes of temptation, particularly proposing to avail himself of the circumstance of our Lord's hungering; and, taking a band of chosen spirits with him, returns to resume his enterprise. Jesus hungers in the desert. Night comes on; the manner in which our Saviour passes the night is described. Morning advances. Satan again appears to Jesus, and, after expressing wonder that he should be so entirely neglected in the wilderness, where others had been miraculously fed, tempts him with a sumptuous banquet of the most luxurious kind. This he rejects, and the banquet vanishes. Satan, finding our Lord not to be assailed on the ground of appetite, tempts him again by offering him riches, as the means of acquiring power: this Jesus also rejects, producing many instances of great actions performed by persons under virtuous poverty, and specifying the danger of riches, and the cares and pains inseparable from power and greatness.

MEANWHILE the new-baptised, who yet remained
At Jordan with the Baptist, and had seen

Him whom they heard so late expressly called
Jesus, Messiah, Son of God declared,
And on that high authority had believed,
And with him talked, and with him lodged; I mean
Andrew and Simon, famous after known,
With others, though in holy writ not named;
Now missing him, their joy so lately found
(So lately found, and so abruptly gone),
Began to doubt, and doubted many days,
And, as the days increased, increased their doubt.
Sometimes they thought he might be only shown,
And for a time caught up to God, as once
Moses was in the mount and missing long,
And the great Tishbite, who on fiery wheels
Rode up to heaven, yet once again to come:
Therefore, as those young prophets then with care
Sought lost Elijah, so in each place these
Nigh to Bethabara; in Jericho
The city of palms, Ænon, and Salem old,
Machærus, and each town or city walled
On this side the broad lake Genezaret,
Or in Peræa: but returned in vain.
Then on the bank of Jordan, by a creek,
Where winds with reeds and osiers whispering play

Plain fishermen (no greater men them call),
Close in a cottage low together got,
Their unexpected loss and plaints outbreathed:
"Alas, from what high hope to what relapse
Unlooked for are we fallen! our eyes beheld
Messiah certainly now come, so long
Expected of our fathers; we have heard
His words, his wisdom full of grace and truth.
'Now, now, for sure, deliverance is at hand,
The kingdom shall to Israel be restored;'
Thus we rejoiced, but soon our joy is turned
Into perplexity and new amaze:
For whither is he gone? what accident
Hath rapt him from us? will he now retire
After appearance, and again prolong
Our expectation? God of Israel,
Send thy Messiah forth; the time is come!
Behold the kings of the earth, how they oppress
Thy chosen; to what height their power unjust
They have exalted, and behind them cast
All fear of thee: arise, and vindicate
Thy glory; free thy people from their yoke!
But let us wait; thus far He hath performed,
Sent his anointed, and to us revealed him,
By his great prophet, pointed at and shown

In public, and with him we have conversed;
Let us be glad of this, and all our fears
Lay on his providence; He will not fail,
Nor will withdraw him now, nor will recall,
Mock us with his blest sight, then snatch him hence
Soon shall we see our hope, our joy, return."
Thus they, out of their plaints, new hope resume
To find whom at the first they found unsought:
But, to his mother Mary, when she saw
Others returned from baptism, not her son,
Nor left at Jordan, tidings of him none,
Within her breast though calm, her breast though pure,
Motherly cares and fears got head, and raised
Some troubled thoughts, which she in sighs thus clad:
"O, what avails me now that honour high,
To have conceived of God, or that salute,
'Hail, highly favoured, among women blest!'
While I to sorrows am no less advanced,
And fears as eminent, above the lot
Of other women, by the birth I bore;
In such a season born, when scarce a shed
Could be obtained to shelter him or me
From the bleak air: a stable was our warmth,

A manger his; yet soon enforced to fly
Thence into Egypt, till the murderous king
Were dead, who sought his life, and missing filled
With infant blood the streets of Bethlehem;
From Egypt home returned, in Nazareth
Hath been our dwelling many years; his life
Private, unactive, calm, contemplative,
Little suspicious to any king; but now
Full grown to man, acknowledged, as I hear,
By John the Baptist, and in public shown,
Son owned from heaven by his Father's voice,
I looked for some great change; to honour? no;
But trouble, as old Simeon plain foretold,
That to the fall and rising he should be
Of many in Israel, and to a sign
Spoken against, that through my very soul
A sword shall pierce; this is my favoured lot,
My exaltation to afflictions high!
Afflicted I may be, it seems, and blest;
I will not argue that, nor will repine.
But where delays he now? some great intent
Conceals him: when twelve years he scarce had
seen,
I lost him, but so found, as well I saw
He could not lose himself, but went about

His Father's business : what he meant I mused,
Since understand ; much more his absence now
Thus long to some great purpose he obscures.
But I to wait with patience am inured ;
My heart hath been a storehouse long of things
And sayings laid up, portending strange events."
Thus Mary, pondering oft, and oft to mind
Recalling what remarkably had passed
Since first her salutation heard, with thoughts
Meekly composed awaited the fulfilling :
The while her Son, tracing the desert wild,
Sole, but with holiest meditations fed,
Into himself descended, and at once
All his great work to come before him set,
How to begin, how to accomplish best
His end of being on earth, and mission high :
For Satan, with sly preface to return,
Had left him vacant, and with speed was gone
Up to the middle region of thick air,
Where all his potentates in council sat :
There, without sign of boast, or sign of joy,
Solicitous and blank, he thus began :
"Princes, heaven's ancient sons, ethereal thrones;
Demonian spirits now, from the element
Each of his reign allotted, rightlier called

Powers of fire, air, water, and earth beneath
(So may we hold our place and these mild seats
Without new trouble)! such an enemy
Is risen to invade us, who no less
Threatens than our expulsion down to hell;
I, as I undertook, and with the vote
Consenting in full frequence was empowered,
Have found him, viewed him, tasted him; but find
Far other labour to be undergone
Than when I dealt with Adam, first of men.
Though Adam by his wife's allurement fell
However to this man inferior far,
If he be man by mother's side at least,
With more than human gifts from heaven adorned,
Perfections absolute, graces divine,
And amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.
Therefore I am returned, lest confidence
Of my success with Eve in Paradise
Deceive ye to persuasion over-sure
Of like succeeding here; I summon all
Rather to be in readiness, with hand
Or counsel to assist: lest I, who erst
Thought none my equal, now be over-matched.'
So spake the old serpent, doubting; and from all
With clamour was assured their utmost aid

At his command: when from amidst them rose
Belial, the dissolutest spirit that fell,
The sensualest, and, after Asmodai,
The fleshliest incubus; and thus advised.
"Set women in his eye, and in his walk,
Among daughters of men the fairest found;
Many are in each region passing fair
As the noon sky; more like to goddesses
Than mortal creatures, graceful and discreet,
Expert in amorous arts, enchanting tongues
Persuasive, virgin majesty with mild
And sweet allayed, yet terrible to approach,
Skilled to retire, and, in retiring, draw
Hearts after them, tangled in amorous nets.
Such object hath the power to soften and tame
Severest temper, smooth the rugged'st brow,
Enerve, and with voluptuous hope dissolve,
Draw out with credulous desire, and lead
At will the manliest, resolutest breast,
As the magnetic hardest iron draws.
Women, when nothing else, beguiled the heart
Of wisest Solomon, and made him build,
And made him bow, to the gods of his wives."
To whom quick answer Satan thus returned:
"Belial, in much uneven scale thou weigh'st

All others by thyself; because of old
Thou thyself doat'st on womankind, admiring
Their shape, their colour, and attractive grace,
None are, thou think'st, but taken with such
toys.
Before the flood thou with thy lusty crew,
False-titled sons of God, roaming the earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupled with them, and begot a race.
Have we not seen, or by relation heard,
In courts and regal chambers how thou lurk'st,
In wood or grove, by mossy fountain side,
In valley or green meadow, to waylay
Some beauty rare, Calisto, Clymene,
Daphne, or Semele, Antiopa,
Or Amymone, Syrinx, many more
Too long, then lay'st thy 'scapes on names adored,
Apollo, Neptune, Jupiter, or Pan,
Satyr, or Faun, or Sylvan? But these haunts
Delight not all; among the sons of men,
How many have with a smile made small account
Of beauty and her lures, easily scorned
All her assaults, on worthier things intent!
Remember that Pellean conqueror,
A youth, how all the beauties of the East

He slightly viewed, and slightly overpassed;
How he, surnamed of Africa, dismissed,
In his prime youth, the fair Iberian maid.
For Solomon, he lived at ease, and, full
Of honour, wealth, high fare, aimed not beyond
Higher design than to enjoy his state;
Thence to the bait of women lay exposed:
But he whom we attempt is wiser far
Than Solomon, of more exalted mind,
Made and set wholly on the accomplishment
Of greatest things. What woman will you find,
Though of this age the wonder and the fame,
On whom his leisure will vouchsafe an eye
Of fond desire? Or should she, confident,
As sitting queen adored on beauty's throne,
Descend with all her winning charms begirt
To enamour, as the zone of Venus once
Wrought that effect on Jove, so fables tell;
How would one look from his majestic brow,
Seated as on the top of virtue's hill,
Discountenance her despised, and put to rout
All her array; her female pride deject,
Or turn to reverent awe! for beauty stands
In the admiration only of weak minds
Led captive; cease to admire, and all her plumes

Fall flat, and shrink into a trivial toy,
At every sudden slighting quite abashed.
Therefore with manlier objects we must try
His constancy ; with such as have more show
Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise,
Rocks, whereon greatest men have oftest wrecked ;
Or that which only seems to satisfy
Lawful desires of nature, not beyond ;
And now I know he hungers, where no food
Is to be found, in the wide wilderness :
The rest commit to me ; I shall let pass
No advantage, and his strength as oft assay."
He ceased, and heard their grant in loud acclaim ;
Then forthwith to him takes a chosen band
Of spirits, likest to himself in guile,
To be at hand, and at his beck appear,
If cause were to unfold some active scene
Of various persons, each to know his part ;
Then to the desert takes with these his flight ;
Where still from shade to shade the Son of God
After forty days' fasting had remained,
Now hungering first, and to himself thus said :
"Where will this end ? four times ten days I've passed
Wandering this woody maze, and human food

Nor tasted, nor had appetite: that fast
To virtue I impute not, or count part
Of what I suffer here; if nature need not,
Or God support nature without repast
Though needing, what praise is it to endure?
But now I feel I hunger, which declares
Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
Can satisfy that need some other way,
Though hunger still remain: so it remain
Without this body's wasting, I content me,
And from the sting of famine fear no harm;
Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts, that feed
Me hungering more to do my Father's will."

It was the hour of night, when thus the Son
Communed in silent walk, then laid him down
Under the hospitable covert nigh
Of trees thick interwoven; there he slept,
And dreamed, as appetite is wont to dream,
Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet:
Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood,
And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
Food to Elijah bringing, even and morn;
Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought:
He saw the prophet also, how he fled

Into the desert, and how there he slept
Under a juniper; then how, awaked,
He found his supper on the coals prepared,
And by the angel was bid rise and eat,
And ate the second time after repose,
The strength whereof sufficed him forty days:
Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse.
Thus wore out night; and now the herald lark
Left his ground nest, high towering to descry
The morn's approach, and greet her with his song:
As lightly from his grassy couch up rose
Our Saviour, and found all was but a dream;
Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting waked.
Up to a hill anon his steps he reared,
From whose high top to ken the prospect round,
If cottage were in view, sheep-cote, or herd;
But cottage, herd, or sheep-cote, none he saw;
Only in a bottom saw a pleasant grove,
With chant of tuneful birds resounding loud:
Thither he bent his way, determined there
To rest at noon, and entered soon the shade
High roofed, and walks beneath, and alleys brown,
That opened in the midst a woody scene;
Nature's own work it seemed (nature taught art),

And, to a superstitious eye, the haunt
Of wood-gods and wood-nymphs: he viewed it round,
When suddenly a man before him stood;
Not rustic as before, but seemlier clad,
As one in city, or court, or palace bred,
And with fair speech these words to him addressed
"With granted leave officious I return,
But much more wonder that the Son of God
In this wild solitude so long should bide,
Of all things destitute; and, well I know,
Not without hunger. Others of some note,
As story tells, have trod this wilderness;
The fugitive bond-woman, with her son,
Outcast Nebaioth, yet found he relief
By a providing angel; all the race
Of Israel here had famished, had not God
Rained from heaven manna; and that prophet bold,
Native of Thebez, wandering here was fed
Twice by a voice inviting him to eat:
Of thee these forty days none hath regard,
Forty and more deserted here indeed."
To whom thus Jesus: "What conclud'st thou hence?
They all had need; I, as thou seest, have none."

"How hast thou hunger then?" Satan replied.
"Tell me, if food were now before thee set,
Wouldst thou not eat?" "Thereafter as I like
The giver," answered Jesus. "Why should that
Cause thy refusal?" said the subtle fiend.
"Hast thou not right to all created things?
Owe not all creatures by just right to thee
Duty and service, nor to stay till bid,
But tender all their power? Nor mention I
Meats by the law unclean, or offered first
To idols, those young Daniel could refuse;
Nor proffered by an enemy, though who
Would scruple that, with want oppressed? Behold,
Nature ashamed, or, better to express,
Troubled, that thou shouldst hunger, hath purveyed
From all the elements her choicest store,
To treat thee, as beseems, and as her Lord,
With honour: only deign to sit and eat."
He spake no dream; for, as his words had end,
Our Saviour, lifting up his eyes, beheld,
In ample space under the broadest shade,
A table richly spread, in regal mode,
With dishes piled, and meats of noblest sort
And savour; beasts of chase, or fowl of game,
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boiled,

Gris-amber-steamed; all fish, from sea or shore,
Freshet or purling brook, of shell or fin,
And exquisitest name, for which was drained
Pontus, and Lucrine bay, and Afric coast.
(Alas, how simple to these cates compared,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve!)
And at a stately sideboard, by the wine,
That fragrant smell diffused, in order stood
Tall stripling youths rich clad, of fairer hue
Than Ganymed or Hylas; distant more
Under the trees now tripped, now solemn stood,
Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades,
With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,
And ladies of the Hesperides, that seemed
Fairer than feigned of old, or fabled since
Of fairy damsels, met in forest wide
By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore.
And all the while harmonious airs were heard
Of chiming strings, or charming pipes; and winds
Of gentlest gale Arabian odours fanned
From their soft wings, and Flora's earliest smells.
Such was the splendour; and the tempter now
His invitation earnestly renewed:
"What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?

These are not fruits forbidden; no interdict
Defends the touching of these viands pure:
Their taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,
But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
All these are spirits of air, and woods, and springs,
Thy gentle ministers, who come to pay
Thee homage, and acknowledge thee their Lord;
What doubt'st thou, Son of God? Sit down and
eat."

To whom thus Jesus temperately replied:
"Said'st thou not that to all things I had right?
And who withholds my power that right to use?
Shall I receive by gift, what of my own,
When and where likes me best, I can command?
I can at will, doubt not, as soon as thou,
Command a table in this wilderness,
And call swift flights of angels ministrant
Arrayed in glory on my cup to attend:
Why shouldst thou then obtrude this diligence,
In vain, where no acceptance it can find?
And with my hunger what hast thou to do?
Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles."

To whom thus answered Satan malcontent:

"That I have also power to give, thou seest;
If of that power I bring thee voluntary
What I might have bestowed on whom I pleased,
And rather opportunely in this place
Chose to impart to thy apparent need,
Why shouldst thou not accept it? but I see
What I can do or offer is suspect;
Of these things others quickly will dispose,
Whose pains have earned the far-fet spoil." With that
Both table and provision vanished quite
With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard:
Only the importune tempter still remained,
And with these words his temptation pursued:
"By hunger, that each other creature tames,
Thou art not to be harmed, therefore not moved;
Thy temperance, invincible besides,
For no allurement yields to appetite;
And all thy heart is set on high designs,
High actions; but wherewith to be achieved?
Great acts require great means of enterprise;
Thou art unknown, unfriended, low of birth,
A carpenter thy father known, thyself
Bred up in poverty and straits at home,
Lost in a desert here and hunger-bit:

Which way, or from what hope, dost thou aspire
To greatness? whence authority derivest?
What followers, what retinue canst thou gain,
Or at thy heels the dizzy multitude,
Longer than thou canst feed them on thy cost?
Money brings honour, friends, conquest, and realms:
What raised Antipatér the Edomite,
And his son Herod placed on Judah's throne,
Thy throne, but gold, that got him puissant friends?
Therefore, if at great things thou wouldst arrive,
Get riches first, get wealth, and treasure heap,
Not difficult, if thou hearken to me:
Riches are mine, fortune is in my hand;
They whom I favour thrive in wealth amain;
While virtue, valour, wisdom, sit in want."
To whom thus Jesus patiently replied:
"Yet wealth, without these three, is impotent
To gain dominion, or to keep it gained.
Witness those ancient empires of the earth,
In height of all their flowing wealth dissolved:
But men endued with these have oft attained
In lowest poverty to highest deeds;
Gideon, and Jephtha, and the shepherd lad,
Whose offspring on the throne of Judah sat

So many ages, and shall yet regain
That seat, and reign in Israel without end.
Among the Heathen (for throughout the world
To me is not unknown what hath been done
Worthy of memorial), canst thou not remember
Quintius, Fabricius, Curius, Regulus?
For I esteem those names of men so poor,
Who could do mighty things, and could contemn
Riches, though offered from the hand of kings.
And what in me seems wanting, but that I
May also in this poverty as soon
Accomplish what they did, perhaps and more?
Extol not riches then, the toil of fools,
The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare: more apt
To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.
What if with like aversion I reject
Riches and realms? yet not, for that a crown,
Golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns,
Brings dangers, troubles, cares, and sleepless nights,
To him who wears the regal diadem,
When on his shoulders each man's burden lies;
For therein stands the office of a king,
His honour, virtue, merit, and chief praise,

That for the public all this weight he bears:
Yet he, who reigns within himself, and rules
Passions, desires, and fears, is more a king;
Which every wise and virtuous man attains;
And who attains not, ill aspires to rule
Cities of men, or headstrong multitudes,
Subject himself to anarchy within,
Or lawless passions in him, which he serves.
But to guide nations in the way of truth
By saving doctrine, and from error lead
To know, and, knowing, worship God aright,
Is yet more kingly; this attracts the soul,
Governs the inner man, the nobler part;
That other o'er the body only reigns,
And oft by force; which, to a generous mind,
So reigning, can be no sincere delight.
Besides, to give a kingdom hath been thought
Greater and nobler done, and to lay down
Far more magnanimous, than to assume.
Riches are needless then, both for themselves
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a sceptre, oftest better missed."

BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

Satan, in a speech of much flattering commendation, endeavours to awaken in Jesus a passion for glory, by particularising various instances of conquests achieved, and great actions performed, by persons at an early period of life. Our Lord replies by showing the vanity of worldly fame, and the improper means by which it is generally attained; and contrasts with it the true glory of religious patience and virtuous wisdom, as exemplified in the character of Job. Satan justifies the love of glory from the example of God himself, who requires it from all his creatures. Jesus detects the fallacy of this argument, by showing that, as goodness is the true ground on which glory is due to the great Creator of all things, sinful man can have no right whatever to it. Satan then urges our Lord respecting his claim to the throne of David; he tells him that the kingdom of Judea, being at that time a province of Rome, cannot be got possession of without much personal exertion on his part, and presses him to lose no time in beginning to reign. Jesus refers him to the time allotted for this, as for all other things; and, after intimating somewhat respecting his own previous sufferings, asks Satan why he should be solicitous for the exaltation of one whose rising was destined to be his fall. Satan replies that his own desperate state, by excluding all hope, leaves little room for fear; and that, as his own punishment was equally doomed, he is not interested in preventing the reign of one, from whose apparent benevolence he might rather hope for some interference in his favour. Satan still pursues his former incitements; and, supposing that the seeming reluctance of Jesus to be thus advanced might arise from his being unacquainted with the world and its glories,

conveys him to the summit of a high mountain, and from thence shows him most of the kingdoms of Asia, particularly pointing out to his notice some extraordinary military preparations of the Parthians to resist the incursions of the Scythians. He then informs our Lord that he showed him this purposely, that he might see how necessary military exertions are to retain the possession of kingdoms, as well as to subdue them at first; and advises him to consider how impossible it was to maintain Judea against two such powerful neighbours as the Romans and Parthians, and how necessary it would be to form an alliance with one or other of them. At the same time, he recommends, and engages to secure to him that of the Parthians; and tells him that by this means his power will be defended from anything that Rome or Cæsar might attempt against it, and that he will be able to extend his glory wide, and especially to accomplish what was particularly necessary to make the throne of Judea really the throne of David, the deliverance and restoration of the ten tribes, still in a state of captivity. Jesus, having briefly noticed the vanity of military efforts, and the weakness of the arm of flesh, says, that when the time comes for ascending his allotted throne, he shall not be slack: he remarks on Satan's extraordinary zeal for the deliverance of the Israelites, to whom he had always shown himself an enemy, and declares their servitude to be the consequence of their idolatry; but adds, that at a future time it may perhaps please God to recall them, and restore them to their liberty and native land.

So spake the Son of God; and Satan stood
Awhile, as mute, confounded what to say,
What to reply, confuted, and convinced
Of his weak arguing and fallacious drift;
At length, collecting all his serpent wiles,

With soothing words renewed, him thus accosts:
"I see thou know'st what is of use to know,
What best to say canst say, to do canst do;
Thy actions to thy words accord, thy words
To thy large heart give utterance due, thy heart
Contains of good, wise, just, the perfect shape.
Should kings and nations from thy mouth consult,
Thy counsel would be as the oracle
Urim and Thummim, those oraculous gems
On Aaron's breast; or tongue of seers old,
Infallible: or wert thou sought to deeds
That might require the array of war, thy skill
Of conduct would be such, that all the world
Could not sustain thy prowess, or subsist
In battle, though against thy few in arms.
These god-like virtues wherefore dost thou hide,
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage wilderness? wherefore deprive
All earth her wonder at thy acts, thyself
The fame and glory; glory, the reward
That sole excites to high attempts, the flame
Of most erected spirits, most tempered pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers all but the highest?

Thy years are ripe, and over-ripe; the son
Of Macedonian Philip had ere these
Won Asia, and the throne of Cyrus held
At his dispose; young Scipio had brought down
The Carthaginian pride; young Pompey quelled
The Pontic king, and in triúmph had rode.
Yet years, and to ripe years judgment mature,
Quench not the thirst of glory, but augment.
Great Julius, whom now all the world admires,
The more he grew in years, the more inflamed
With glory, wept that he had lived so long
Inglorious: but thou yet art not too late."
To whom our Saviour calmly thus replied:
"Thou neither dost persuade me to seek wealth
For empire's sake, nor empire to affect
For glory's sake, by all thy argument.
For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
The people's praise, if always praise unmixed?
And what the people but a herd confused,
A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
Things vulgar, and, well weighed, scarce worth the praise?
They praise, and they admire, they know not what,
And know not whom, but as one leads the other;
And what delight to be by such extolled,

To live upon their tongues, and be their talk,
Of whom to be dispraised were no small praise?
His lot who dares be singularly good.
The intelligent among them and the wise
Are few, and glory scarce of few is raised.
This is true glory and renown; when God,
Looking on the earth, with approbation marks
The just man, and divulges him through heaven
To all his angels, who with true applause
Recount his praises; thus he did to Job,
When, to extend his fame through heaven and earth,
As thou to thy reproach mayst well remember,
He asked thee, 'Hast thou seen my servant Job?'
Famous he was in heaven, on earth less known;
Where glory is false glory, attributed
To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame.
They err, who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to overrun
Large countries, and in field great battles win,
Great cities by assault: what do these worthies,
But rob, and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighbouring or remote,
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind

Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of peace destroy;
Then swell with pride, and must be titled gods,
Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers,
Worshipped with temple, priest, and sacrifice?
One is the son of Jove, of Mars the other;
Till conqueror death discovers them scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deformed,
Violent or shameful death their due reward.
But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attained,
Without ambition, war, or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance; I mention still
Him, whom thy wrongs, with saintly patience borne,
Made famous in a land and times obscure;
Who names not now with honour patient Job?
Poor Socrates (who next more memorable?)
By what he taught, and suffered for so doing,
For truth's sake suffering death unjust, lives now
Equal in fame to proudest conquerors.
Yet if for fame and glory aught be done,
Aught suffered; if young African for fame
His wasted country freed from Punic rage,

The deed becomes unpraised, the man at least,
And loses, though but verbal, his reward:
Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek,
Oft not deserved? I seek not mine, but his
Who sent me; and thereby witness whence I am."
To whom the tempter murmuring thus replied:
"Think not so slight of glory; therein least
Resembling thy great Father: he seeks glory,
And for his glory all things made, all things
Orders and governs; nor content in heaven,
By all his angels glorified, requires
Glory from men, from all men, good or bad,
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption;
Above all sacrifice, or hallowed gift,
Glory he requires, and glory he receives,
Promiscuous from all nations, Jew or Greek,
Or barbarous, nor exception hath declared;
From us, his foes pronounced, glory he exacts."
To whom our Saviour fervently replied:
"And reason: since his Word all things produced,
Though chiefly not for glory as prime end,
But to show forth his goodness, and impart
His good communicable to every soul
Freely; of whom what could he less expect
Than glory and benediction, that is, thanks,

The slightest, easiest, readiest recompense
From them who could return him nothing else;
And, not returning that, would likeliest render
Contempt instead, dishonour, obloquy?
Hard recompense, unsuitable return
For so much good, so much beneficence!
But why should man seek glory, who of his own
Hath nothing, and to whom nothing belongs
But condemnation, ignominy, and shame?
Who, for so many benefits received,
Turned recreant to God, ingrate and false,
And so of all true good himself despoiled;
Yet, sacrilegious, to himself would take
That which to God alone of right belongs:
Yet so much bounty is in God, such grace,
That who advance his glory, not their own,
Them he himself to glory will advance."
So spake the Son of God; and here again
Satan had not to answer, but stood struck
With guilt of his own sin; for he himself,
Insatiable of glory, had lost all;
Yet of another plea bethought him soon:
"Of glory, as thou wilt," said he, "so deem;
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass.
But to a kingdom thou art born, ordained

To sit upon thy father David's throne,
By mother's side thy father; though thy right
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part
Easily from possession won with arms:
Judea now, and all the Promised Land,
Reduced a province under Roman yoke,
Obeys Tiberius; nor is always ruled
With temperate sway; oft have they violated
The temple, oft the law, with foul affronts,
Abominations rather, as did once
Antiochus; and think'st thou to regain
Thy right by sitting still, or thus retiring?
So did not Maccabeus: he indeed
Retired into the desert, but with arms;
And o'er a mighty king so oft prevailed,
That by strong hand his family obtained,
Though priests, the crown, and David's throne usurped,
With Modin and her suburbs once content.
If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
And duty; and zeal and duty are not slow,
But on Occasion's forelock watchful wait:
They themselves rather are occasion best;
Zeal of thy father's house, duty to free
Thy country from her Heathen servitude.

So shalt thou best fulfil, best verify
The prophets old, who sung thy endless reign;
The happier reign, the sooner it begins:
Reign then; what canst thou better do the while?"
To whom our Saviour answer thus returned:
"All things are best fulfilled in their due time;
And time there is for all things, Truth hath said;
If of my reign prophetic writ hath told,
That it shall never end, so, when begin,
The Father in his purpose hath decreed,
He, in whose hand all times and seasons roll.
What if he hath decreed that I shall first
Be tried in humble state, and things adverse,
By tribulations, injuries, insults,
Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting,
Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
What I can suffer, how obey? Who best
Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
Well hath obeyed; just trial, ere I merit
My exaltation without change or end.
But what concerns it thee, when I begin
My everlasting kingdom? Why art thou
Solicitous? What moves thy inquisition?
Know'st thou not that my rising is thy fall,

And my promotion will be thy destruction?"
To whom the tempter, inly racked, replied:
"Let that come when it comes; all hope is lost
Of my reception into grace; what worse?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear:
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst; worst is my port,
My harbour, and my ultimate repose;
The end I would attain, my final good.
My error was my error, and my crime
My crime; whatever, for itself condemned,
And will alike be punished, whether thou
Reign, or reign not; though to that gentle brow
Willingly could I fly, and hope thy reign,
From that placid aspect and meek regard,
Rather than aggravate my evil state,
Would stand between me and thy Father's ire
(Whose ire I dread more than the fire of hell),
A shelter, and a kind of shading cool
Interposition, as a summer's cloud.
If I then to the worst that can be haste,
Why move thy feet so slow to what is best,
Happiest, both to thyself and all the world,

That thou, who worthiest art, shouldst be their king?
Perhaps thou linger'st, in deep thoughts detained
Of the enterprise so hazardous and high!
No wonder; for, though in thee be united
What of perfection can in man be found,
Or human nature can receive, consider,
Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
At home, scarce viewed the Galilean towns,
And once a year Jerusalem, few days'
Short sojourn; and what thence couldst thou observe?
The world thou hast not seen, much less her glory,
Empires, and monarchs, and their radiant courts,
Best school of best experience, quickest insight
In all things that to greatest actions lead.
The wisest, inexperienced, will be ever
Timorous and loth; with novice modesty
(As he who, seeking asses, found a kingdom)
Irresolute, unhardy, unadventurous:
But I will bring thee where thou soon shalt quit
Those rudiments, and see before thine eyes
The monarchies of the earth, their pomp and state;
Sufficient introduction to inform
Thee, of thyself so apt, in regal arts,

And regal mysteries ; that thou may'st know
How best their opposition to withstand."
With that (such power was given him then), he took
The Son of God up to a mountain high.
It was a mountain, at whose verdant feet
A spacious plain, outstretched in circuit wide,
Lay pleasant ; from his side two rivers flowed,
The one winding, the other straight, and left between
Fair champaign with less rivers interveined,
Then meeting joined their tribute to the sea ;
Fertile of corn the glebe, of oil, and wine ;
With herds the pasture thronged, with flocks the hills ;
Huge cities and high-towered, that well might seem
The seats of mightiest monarchs ; and so large
The prospect was, that here and there was room
For barren desert, fountainless and dry.
To this high mountain too the tempter brought
Our Saviour, and new train of words began :
" Well have we speeded, and o'er hill and dale,
Forest and field and flood, temples and towers,
Cut shorter many a league ; here thou behold'st
Assyria, and her empire's ancient bounds,

Araxes and the Caspian lake; thence on
As far as Indus east, Euphrates west,
And oft beyond: to south the Persian bay,
And, inaccessible, the Arabian drought:
Here Nineveh, of length within her wall
Several days' journey, built by Ninus old,
Of that first golden monarchy the seat,
And seat of Salmanassar, whose success
Israel in long captivity still mourns;
There Babylon, the wonder of all tongues,
As ancient, but rebuilt by him who twice
Judah and all thy father David's house
Led captive, and Jerusalem laid waste,
Till Cyrus set them free; Persepolis,
His city, there thou seest, and Bactra there;
Ecbatana her structure vast there shows,
And Hecatompylos her hundred gates;
There Susa by Choaspes' amber stream,
The drink of none but kings; of later fame,
Built by Emathian or by Parthian hands,
The great Seleucia, Nisibis, and there
Artaxata, Teredon, Ctesiphon,
Turning with easy eye, thou may'st behold.
All these the Parthian (now some ages past,
By great Arsaces led, who founded first

That empire) under his dominion holds,
From the luxurious kings of Antioch won.
And just in time thou com'st to have a view
Of his great power; for now the Parthian king
In Ctesiphon hath gathered all his host
Against the Scythian, whose incursions wild
Have wasted Sogdiana; to her aid
He marches now in haste; see, though from far,
His thousands, in what martial equipage
They issue forth, steel bows and shafts their arms,
Of equal dread in flight or in pursuit;
All horsemen, in which fight they most excel;
See how in warlike muster they appear,
In rhombs, and wedges, and half-moons, and wings."
He looked, and saw what numbers numberless
The city gates out-poured, light-armed troops,
In coats of mail and military pride;
In mail their horses clad, yet fleet and strong,
Prancing their riders bore, the flower and choice
Of many provinces from bound to bound;
From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana, to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales;
From Atropatia, and the neighbouring plains
Of Adiabene, Media, and the south

Of Susiana, to Balsara's haven.
He saw them in their forms of battle ranged,
How quick they wheeled, and, flying, behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy showers against the face
Of their pursuers, and overcame by flight;
The field all iron cast a gleaming brown:
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn
Cuirassiers all in steel for standing fight,
Chariots, or elephants indorsed with towers
Of archers; nor of labouring pioneers
A multitude, with spades and axes armed
To lay hills plain, fell woods, or valleys fill,
Or where plain was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud, as with a yoke:
Mules after these, camels, and dromedaries,
And waggons, fraught with utensils of war.
Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,
The city of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
The fairest of her sex Angelica,
His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
Both Paynim, and the peers of Charlemain.
Such and so numerous was their chivalry:

At sight whereof the fiend yet more presumed,
And to our Saviour thus his words renewed:
"That thou may'st know I seek not to engage
Thy virtue, and not every way secure
On no slight grounds thy safety; hear, and mark,
To what end I have brought thee hither, and shown
All this fair sight; thy kingdom, though foretold
By prophet or by angel, unless thou
Endeavour, as thy father David did,
Thou never shalt obtain; prediction still
In all things, and all men, supposes means;
Without means used, what it predicts revokes.
But, say thou wert possessed of David's throne,
By free consent of all, none opposite,
Samaritan or Jew; how couldst thou hope
Long to enjoy it, quiet and secure,
Between two such enclosing enemies,
Roman and Parthian? Therefore one of these
Thou must make sure thy own; the Parthian first,
By my advice, as nearer, and of late
Found able by invasion to annoy
Thy country, and captive lead away her kings,
Antigonus and old Hyrcanus, bound,
Maugre the Roman: it shall be my task
To render thee the Parthian at dispose;

Choose which thou wilt, by conquest or by league:
By him thou shalt regain, without him not,
That which alone can truly reinstall thee
In David's royal seat, his true successor,
Deliverance of thy brethren, those ten tribes,
Whose offspring in his territory yet serve,
In Habor, and among the Medes dispersed:
Ten sons of Jacob, two of Joseph, lost
Thus long from Israel, serving, as of old
Their fathers in the land of Egypt served,
This offer sets before thee to deliver.
These if from servitude thou shalt restore
To their inheritance, then, nor till then,
Thou on the throne of David in full glory,
From Egypt to Euphrates, and beyond,
Shalt reign, and Rome or Cæsar not need fear."

To whom our Saviour answered thus, unmoved:
"Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm
And fragile arms, much instrument of war,
Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,
Before mine eyes thou hast set; and in my ear
Vented much policy, and projects deep
Of enemies, of aids, battles, and leagues,
Plausible to the world, to me worth naught.
Means I must use, thou say'st, prediction else

Will unpredict, and fail me of the throne:
My time, I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off), is not yet come:
When that comes, think not thou to find me slack
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shown me, argument
Of human weakness rather than of strength.
My brethren, as thou call'st them, those ten tribes,
I must deliver, if I mean to reign
David's true heir, and his full sceptre sway
To just extent over all Israel's sons.
But whence to thee this zeal? Where was it then
For Israel, or for David, or his throne,
When thou stood'st up his tempter to the pride
Of numbering Israel, which cost the lives
Of threescore and ten thousand Israelites
By three days' pestilence? Such was thy zeal
To Israel then; the same that now to me!
As for those captive tribes, themselves were they
Who wrought their own captivity, fell off
From God to worship calves, the deities
Of Egypt, Baal next, and Ashtaroth,
And all the idolatries of heathen round,
Besides their other worse than heathenish crimes;

Nor in the land of their captivity
Humbled themselves, or penitent besought
The God of their forefathers, but so died
Impenitent, and left a race behind
Like to themselves, distinguishable scarce
From Gentiles but by circumcision vain;
And God with idols in their worship joined.
Should I of these the liberty regard,
Who, freed, as to their ancient patrimony,
Unhumbled, unrepentant, unreformed,
Headlong would follow; and to their gods perhaps
Of Bethel and of Dan? No, let them serve
Their enemies who serve idols with God.
Yet he at length (time to himself best known)
Remembering Abraham, by some wondrous call
May bring them back repentant and sincere,
And at their passing cleave the Assyrian flood,
While to their native land with joy they haste;
As the Red Sea and Jordan once he cleft,
When to the Promised Land their fathers passed:
To his due time and providence I leave them."
So spake Israel's true King, and to the fiend
Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles.
So fares it when with truth falsehood contends.

BOOK IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

Satan, persisting in the temptation of our Lord, shows him imperial Rome in its greatest pomp and splendour, as a power which he probably would prefer before that of the Parthians; and tells him that he might with the greatest ease expel Tiberius, restore the Romans to their liberty, and make himself master, not only of the Roman empire, but, by so doing, of the whole world, and inclusively of the throne of David. Our Lord, in reply, expresses his contempt of grandeur and worldly power; notices the luxury, vanity, and profligacy of the Romans, declaring how little they merited to be restored to that liberty which they had lost by their misconduct; and briefly refers to the greatness of his own future kingdom. Satan, now desperate, to enhance the value of his proffered gifts, professes that the only terms on which he will bestow them are our Saviour's falling down and worshipping him. Our Lord expresses a firm but temperate indignation at such a proposition, and rebukes the tempter by the title of "Satan for ever damned." Satan, abashed, attempts to justify himself: he then assumes a new ground of temptation, and proposing to Jesus the intellectual gratifications of wisdom and knowledge, points out to him the celebrated seat of ancient learning, Athens, its schools, and other various resorts of learned teachers and their disciples; accompanying the view with a highly-finished panegyric on the Grecian musicians, poets, orators, and philosophers of the different sects. Jesus replies by showing the vanity and insufficiency of the boasted heathen philosophy: and prefers to the music, poetry, eloquence, and didactic policy of the Greeks, those of the inspired Hebrew writers. Satan, irritated at the failure of all his attempts, upbraids the indiscretion of our Saviour in rejecting his offers: and

having, in ridicule of his expected kingdom, foretold the sufferings that our Lord was to undergo, carries him back into the wilderness, and leaves him there. Night comes on: Satan raises a tremendous storm, and attempts farther to alarm Jesus with frightful dreams, and terrific threatening spectres; which, however, have no effect upon him. A calm, bright, beautiful morning succeeds to the horrors of the night. Satan again presents himself to our blessed Lord; and, from noticing the storm of the preceding night as pointed chiefly at him, takes occasion once more to insult him with an account of the sufferings which he was certainly to undergo. This only draws from our Lord a brief rebuke. Satan, now at the height of his desperation, confesses that he had frequently watched Jesus from his birth, purposely to discover if he was the Messiah; and, collecting from what passed at the river Jordan that he most probably was so, he had from that time more assiduously followed him, in hopes of gaining some advantage over him, which would most effectually prove that he was not really that Divine Person destined to be his "fatal enemy." In this he acknowledges that he has hitherto completely failed; but still determines to make one more trial of him. Accordingly he conveys him to the temple at Jerusalem; and, placing him on a pointed eminence, requires him to prove his divinity either by standing there, or casting himself down with safety. Our Lord reproves the tempter, and at the same time manifests his own divinity by standing on this dangerous point. Satan, amazed and terrified, instantly falls: and repairs to his infernal compeers to relate the bad success of his enterprise. Angels in the meantime convey our blessed Lord to a beautiful valley, and while they minister to him a repast of celestial food, celebrate his victory in a triumphant hymn.

PERPLEXED and troubled at his bad success
The tempter stood, nor had what to reply;

Discovered in his fraud, thrown from his hope
So oft, and the persuasive rhetoric
That sleeked his tongue, and won so much on Eve,
So little here—nay, lost; but Eve was Eve:
This far his overmatch, who, self-deceived
And rash, beforehand had no better weighed
The strength he was to cope with, or his own:
But as a man who had been matchless held
In cunning, over-reached where least he thought,
To salve his credit, and for every spite,
Still will be tempting him who foils him still,
And never cease, though to his shame the more;
Or as a swarm of flies in vintage time,
About the wine-press where sweet must is poured,
Beat off, returns as oft with humming sound;
Or surging waves against a solid rock,
Though all to shivers dashed, the assault renew
(Vain battery!), and in froth or bubbles end:
So Satan, whom repulse upon repulse
Met ever, and to shameful silence brought,
Yet gives not o'er, though desperate of success,
And his vain importunity pursues.
He brought our Saviour to the western side
Of that high mountain, whence he might behold
Another plain, long, but in breadth not wide,

Washed by the southern sea, and, on the north,
To equal length backed with a ridge of hills
That screened the fruits of the earth, and seats of men,
From cold septentrion blasts; thence in the midst
Divided by a river, of whose banks
On each side an imperial city stood,
With towers and temples proudly elevate,
On seven small hills, with palaces adorned,
Porches and theatres, baths, aqueducts,
Statues and trophies, and triumphal arcs,
Gardens and groves, presented to his eyes,
Above the height of mountains interposed
(By what strange parallax, or optic skill
Of vision, multiplied through air or glass
Of telescope, were curious to inquire);
And now the tempter thus his silence broke:
"The city which thou seest no other deem
Than great and glorious Rome, queen of the earth,
So far renowned, and with the spoils enriched
Of nations; there the Capitol thou seest,
Above the rest lifting his stately head
On the Tarpeian rock, her citadel
Impregnable; and there Mount Palatine,
The imperial palace, compass huge, and high

The structure, skill of noblest architects,
With gilded battlements conspicuous far,
Turrets and terraces and glittering spires;
Many a fair edifice besides, more like
Houses of gods, so well I have disposed
My aery microscope, thou mayest behold,
Outside and inside both, pillars and roofs,
Carved work, the hand of famed artificers
In cedar, marble, ivory, or gold.
Thence to the gates cast round thine eye, and see
What conflux issuing forth, or entering in:
Prætors, proconsuls to their provinces
Hasting, or on return, in robes of state;
Lictors and rods, the ensigns of their power;
Legions and cohorts, turms of horse and wings:
Or embassies from regions far remote,
In various habits, on the Appian road,
Or on the Emilian: some from farthest south,
Syene, and where the shadow both way falls,
Meroe, Nilotic isle; and, more to west,
The realm of Bocchus to the Black-moor sea;
From the Asian kings, and Parthian among these;
From India and the Golden Chersonese,
And utmost Indian isle Taprobane,
Dusk faces with white silken turbans wreathed;

From Gallia, Gades, and the British west;
Germans, and Scythians, and Sarmatians, north
Beyond Danubius to the Tauric pool.
All nations now to Rome obedience pay;
To Rome's great emperor, whose wide domain,
In ample territory, wealth, and power,
Civility of manners, arts, and arms,
And long renown, thou justly mayst prefer
Before the Parthian. These two thrones except,
The rest are barbarous, and scarce worth the sight,
Shared among petty kings too far removed;
These having shown thee, I have shown thee all
The kingdoms of the world, and all their glory.
This emperor hath no son, and now is old,
Old and lascivious, and from Rome retired
To Capreæ, an island small, but strong,
On the Campanian shore, with purpose there
His horrid lusts in private to enjoy;
Committing to a wicked favourite
All public cares, and yet of him suspicious,
Hated of all, and hating. With what ease,
Endued with regal virtues as thou art,
Appearing, and beginning noble deeds,
Mightst thou expel this monster from his throne,
Now made a sty, and, in his place ascending,

A victor people free from servile yoke
And with my help thou mayst; to me the power
Is given, and by that right I give it thee.
Aim therefore at no less than all the world;
Aim at the highest: without the highest attained,
Will be for thee no sitting, or not long,
On David's throne, be prophesied what will."
To whom the Son of God, unmoved, replied:
"Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
Of luxury, though called magnificence,
More than of arms before, allure mine eye,
Much less my mind; though thou shouldst add to tell
Their sumptuous gluttonies, and gorgeous feasts
On citron tables or Atlantic stone
(For I have also heard, perhaps have read),
Their wines of Setia, Cales, and Falerne,
Chios, and Crete, and how they quaff in gold
Crystal, and myrrhine cups, embossed with gems
And studs of pearl; to me shouldst tell, who thirst
And hunger still. Then embassies thou show'st
From nations far and nigh: what honour that,
But tedious waste of time, to sit and hear
So many hollow compliments and lies,
Outlandish flatteries? Then proceed'st to talk

Of the emperor, how easily subdued,
How gloriously; I shall, thou say'st, expel
A brutal monster; what if I withal
Expel a devil who first made him such?
Let his tormentor conscience find him out:
For him I was not sent; nor yet to free
That people, victor once, now vile and base,
Deservedly made vassal; who, once just,
Frugal and mild and temperate, conquered well,
But governed ill the nations under yoke,
Peeling their provinces, exhausted all
By lust and rapine; first ambitious grown
Of triumph, that insulting vanity;
Then cruel, by their sports to blood inured
Of fighting beasts, and men to beasts exposed;
Luxurious by their wealth, and greedier still,
And from the daily scene effeminate.
What wise and valiant man would seek to free
These, thus degenerate, by themselves enslaved,
Or could of inward slaves make outward free?
Know, therefore, when my season comes to sit
On David's throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and overshadowing all the earth;
Or as a stone, that shall to pieces dash
All monarchies besides throughout the world;

And of my kingdom there shall be no end:
Means there shall be to this; but what the means
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell."
To whom the tempter, impudent, replied:
"I see all offers made by me how slight
Thou valuest, because offered, and reject'st;
Nothing will please the difficult and nice,
Or nothing more than still to contradict:
On the other side know also thou that I
On what I offer set as high esteem,
Nor what I part with mean to give for naught;
All these, which in a moment thou behold'st,
The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give
(For, given to me, I give to whom I please),
No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else,
On this condition: if thou wilt fall down
And worship me as thy superior lord
(Easily done), and hold them all of me;
For what can less so great a gift deserve?
Whom thus our Saviour answered with disdain:
"I never liked thy talk, thy offers less;
Now both abhor, since thou hast dared to utter
The abominable terms, impious condition:
But I endure the time, till which expired
Thou hast permission on me. It is written,

The first of all commandments, Thou shalt worship
The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve;
And darest thou to the Son of God propound
To worship thee accursed? now more accursed
For this attempt, bolder than that on Eve,
And more blasphemous; which expect to rue.
The kingdoms of the world to thee were given?
Permitted rather, and by thee usurped;
Other donation none thou canst produce.
If given, by whom but by the King of kings,
God over all supreme? If given to thee,
By thee how fairly is the Giver now
Repaid! But gratitude in thee is lost
Long since. Wert thou so void of fear or shame
As offer them to me, the Son of God?
To me my own, on such abhorréd pact,
That I fall down and worship thee as God?
Get thee behind me; plain thou now appear'st
That evil one, Satan for ever damned."
To whom the fiend, with fear abashed, replied:
"Be not so sore offended, Son of God,
Though sons of God both angels are and men,
If I, to try whether in higher sort
Than these thou bear'st that title, have proposed
What both from men and angels I receive,

Tetrarchs of Fire, Air, Flood, and on the Earth
Nations beside from all the quartered winds,
God of this world invoked, and world beneath:
Who, then, thou art, whose coming is foretold
To me most fatal, me it most concerns;
The trial hath indamaged thee no way,
Rather more honour left and more esteem:
Me naught advantaged, missing what I aimed.
Therefore let pass, as they are transitory,
The kingdoms of this world; I shall no more
Advise thee; gain them as thou canst, or not:
And thou thyself seem'st otherwise inclined
Than to a worldly crown; addicted more
To contemplation and profound dispute,
As by that early action may be judged,
When, slipping from thy mother's eye, thou went'st
Alone into the temple, there was found
Among the gravest Rabbies, disputant
On points and questions fitting Moses' chair,
Teaching, not taught. The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day: be famous, then,
By wisdom; as thy empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o'er all the world
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend.

All knowledge is not couched in Moses' law,
The Pentateuch, or what the prophets wrote;
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by nature's light,
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by persuasion, as thou mean'st.
Without their learning, how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee, hold conversation meet?
How wilt thou reason with them, how refute
Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes?
Error by his own arms is best evinced.
Look once more, ere we leave this specular mount,
Westward, much nearer by south-west, behold;
Where on the Ægean shore a city stands,
Built nobly, pure the air, and light the soil;
Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts
And eloquence, native to famous wits
Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,
City or suburban, studious walks and shades.
See there the olive grove of Academe,
Plato's retirement, where the Attic bird
Trills her thick-warbled notes the summer long;
There, flowery hill, Hymettus, with the sound
Of bees' industrious murmur, oft invites
To studious musing; there Ilissus rolls

His whispering stream : within the walls then view
The schools of ancient sages ; his, who bred
Great Alexander to subdue the world,
Lyceum there, and painted Stoa next :
There shalt thou hear and learn the secret power
Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
By voice or hand ; and various-measured verse,
Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes,
And his who gave them breath, but higher sung,
Blind Melesigenes, thence Homer called,
Whose poem Phœbus challenged for his own :
Thence what the lofty grave tragedians taught
In chorus or iambic, teachers best
Of moral prudence, with delight received
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,
High actions, and high passions best describing :
Thence to the famous orators repair,
Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
Wielded at will that fierce democracy,
Shook the arsenal, and fulmined over Greece
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne :
To sage philosophy next lend thine ear,
From heaven descended to the low-roofed house
Of Socrates ; see there his tenement,

Whom, well inspired, the oracle pronounced
Wisest of men; from whose mouth issued forth
Mellifluous streams, that watered all the schools
Of Academics old and new, with those
Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect
Epicurean, and the Stoic severe;
These here revolve, or, as thou lik'st, at home,
Till time mature thee to a kingdom's weight;
These rules will render thee a king complete
Within thyself, much more with empire joined."
To whom our Saviour sagely thus replied:
"Think not but that I know these things; or think
I know them not, not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I ought: he who receives
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
The first and wisest of them all professed
To know this only, that he nothing knew;
The next to fabling fell, and smooth conceits;
A third sort doubted all things, though plain sense;
Others in virtue placed felicity,
But virtue joined with riches and long life;
In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease;

The Stoic last, in philosophic pride,
By him called virtue; and his virtuous man,
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing,
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,
As fearing God nor man, contemning all
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,
Which, when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can;
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.
Alas, what can they teach, and not mislead,
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,
And how the world began, and how man fell
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?
Much of the soul they talk, but all awry,
And in themselves seek virtue; and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none;
Rather accuse him under usual names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these
True wisdom, finds her not; or by delusion,
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,
An empty cloud. However, many books,
Wise men have said, are wearisome; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,

(And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek?)
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge;
As children gathering pebbles on the shore.
Or, if I would delight my private hours
With music or with poem, where so soon
As in our native language can I find
That solace? All our law and story strewed
With hymns, our psalms with artful terms inscribed,
Our Hebrew songs and harps, in Babylon
That pleased so well our victor's ear, declare
That rather Greece from us these arts derived;
Ill imitated, while they loudest sing
The vices of their deities, and their own,
In fable, hymn, or song, so personating
Their gods ridiculous, and themselves past shame.
Remove their swelling epithets, thick laid
As varnish on a harlot's cheek, the rest,
Thin-sown with aught of profit or delight,
Will far be found unworthy to compare
With Sion's songs, to all true tastes excelling,

Where God is praised aright, and godlike men,
The holiest of holies, and his saints
(Such are from God inspired, not such from thee),
Unless where moral virtue is expressed
By light of nature, not in all quite lost
Their orators thou then extoll'st as those
The top of eloquence; statists indeed,
And lovers of their country, as may seem;
But herein to our prophets far beneath,
As men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestic unaffected style,
Than all the oratory of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so,
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat;
These only with our Law best form a king."
So spake the Son of God; but Satan, now
Quite at a loss (for all his darts were spent),
Thus to our Saviour with stern brow replied:
"Since neither wealth nor honour, arms nor arts,
Kingdom or empire pleases thee, nor aught
By me proposed in life contemplative
Or active, tended on by glory or fame,
What dost thou in this world? The wilderness

For thee is fittest place; I found thee there,
And thither will return thee; yet remember
What I foretold thee, soon thou shalt have cause
To wish thou never hadst rejected, thus
Nicely or cautiously, my offered aid,
Which would have set thee in short time with ease
On David's throne, or throne of all the world,
Now at full age, fulness of time, thy season
When prophecies of thee are best fulfilled.
Now contrary, if I read aught in heaven,
Or heaven write aught of fate, by what the stars
Voluminous, or single characters,
In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
Sorrows and labours, opposition, hate,
Attend thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death;
A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,
Real or allegoric, I discern not;
Nor when; eternal sure, as without end,
Without beginning; for no date prefixed
Directs me in the starry rubric set."

So saying, he took (for still he knew his power
Not yet expired), and to the wilderness
Brought back the Son of God, and left him there,
Feigning to disappear. Darkness now rose,

As day-light sunk, and brought in louring night,
Her shadowy offspring, unsubstantial both,
Privation mere of light, and absent day.
Our Saviour meek, and with untroubled mind
After his aëry jaunt, though hurried sore,
Hungry and cold, betook him to his rest,
Wherever, under some concourse of shades,
Whose branching arms thick intertwined might shield
From dews and damps of night his sheltered head;
But sheltered, slept in vain; for at his head
The tempter watched, and soon with ugly dreams
Disturbed his sleep. And either tropic now
Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven; the clouds,
From many a horrid rift, abortive poured
Fierce rain with lightning mixed, water with fire
In ruin reconciled: nor slept the winds
Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vexed wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bowed their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer. Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God, yet only stood'st
Unshaken! Nor yet stayed the terror there;

Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
Environed thee—some howled, some yelled, some
shrieked,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Satt'st unappalled in calm and sinless peace!
Thus passed the night so foul, till morning fair
Came forth with pilgrim steps, in amice grey:
Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar
Of thunder, chased the clouds, and laid the winds
And grisly spectres which the fiend had raised
To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
And now the sun with more effectual beams
Had cheered the face of earth, and dried the wet
From drooping plant or dropping tree; the birds,
Who all things now behold more fresh and green,
After a night of storms so ruinous,
Cleared up their choicest notes in bush and spray,
To gratulate the sweet return of morn.
Nor yet, amidst this joy and brightest morn,
Was absent, after all his mischief done,
The Prince of Darkness: glad would also seem
Of this fair change, and to our Saviour came;
Yet with no new device (they all were spent),
Rather by this his last affront resolved,
Desperate of better course, to vent his rage

And mad despite to be so oft repelled.
Him walking on a sunny hill he found,
Backed on the north and west by a thick wood;
Out of the wood he starts in wonted shape,
And in a careless mood thus to him said:
"Fair morning yet betides thee, Son of God,
After a dismal night: I heard the wrack,
As earth and sky would mingle; but myself
Was distant; and these flaws, though mortals fear them
As dangerous to the pillared frame of heaven,
Or to the earth's dark basis underneath,
Are to the main as inconsiderable
And harmless, if not wholesome, as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone;
Yet, as being ofttimes noxious where they light
On man, beast, plant, wasteful and turbulent,
Like turbulencies in the affairs of men,
Over whose heads they roar and seem to point,
They oft fore-signify and threaten ill:
This tempest at this desert most was bent;
Of men at thee, for only thou here dwell'st.
Did I not tell thee, if thou didst reject
The perfect season offered with my aid
To win thy destined seat, but wilt prolong

All to the push of fate, pursue thy way
Of gaining David's throne, no man knows when,
For both the when and how is nowhere told?
Thou shalt be what thou art ordained, no doubt;
For angels have proclaimed it, but concealing
The time and means. Each act is rightliest done
Not when it must, but when it may be best:
If thou observe not this, be sure to find,
What I foretold thee, many a hard assay
Of dangers and adversities and pains,
Ere thou of Israel's sceptre get fast hold;
Whereof this ominous night, that closed thee round,
So many terrors, voices, prodigies,
May warn thee, as a sure foregoing sign."
So talked he, while the Son of God went on,
And stayed not, but in brief him answered thus:
"Me worse than wet thou find'st not: other harm
Those terrors, which thou speak'st of, did me none;
I never feared they could, though noising loud
And threatening nigh: what they can do as signs
Betokening, or ill-boding, I contemn
As false portents, not sent from God, but thee;
Who, knowing I shall reign past thy preventing,
Obtrud'st thy offered aid, that I, accepting,

At least might seem to hold all power of thee,
Ambitious spirit! and wouldst be thought my god;
And storm'st refused, thinking to terrify
Me to thy will! Desist (thou art discerned,
And toil'st in vain), nor me in vain molest."
To whom the fiend, now swoln with rage, replied:
"Then hear, O son of David, virgin-born,
For Son of God to me is yet in doubt;
Of the Messiah I had heard, foretold
By all the prophets; of thy birth at length,
Announced by Gabriel, with the first I knew,
And of the angelic song in Bethlehem field,
On thy birth-night that sung thee Saviour born.
From that time seldom have I ceased to eye
Thy infancy, thy childhood, and thy youth,
Thy manhood last, though yet in private bred;
Till at the ford of Jordan, whither all
Flock to the Baptist, I, among the rest
(Though not to be baptised), by voice from heaven
Heard thee pronounced the Son of God beloved.
Thenceforth I thought thee worth my nearer view
And narrower scrutiny, that I might learn
In what degree or meaning thou art called
The Son of God, which bears no single sense.
The son of God I also am, or was;

And if I was, I am; relation stands;
All men are sons of God; yet thee I thought
In some respect far higher so declared:
Therefore I watched thy footsteps from that hour,
And followed thee still on to this waste wild;
Where, by all best conjectures, I collect
Thou art to be my fatal enemy:
Good reason, then, if I beforehand seek
To understand my adversary, who
And what he is; his wisdom, power, intent:
By parle or composition, truce or league,
To win him, or win from him what I can:
And opportunity I here have had
To try thee, sift thee, and confess have found thee
Proof against all temptation, as a rock
Of adamant, and, as a centre, firm;
To the utmost of mere man both wise and good,
Not more; for honours, riches, kingdoms, glory,
Have been before contemned, and may again.
Therefore, to know what more thou art than man
Worth naming Son of God by voice from heaven,
Another method I must now begin."

So saying, he caught him up, and, without wing
Of hippogrif, bore through the air sublime,
Over the wilderness and o'er the plain,

Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
The holy city, lifted high her towers,
And higher yet the glorious temple reared
Her pile, far off appearing like a mount
Of alabaster, topt with golden spires :
There, on the highest pinnacle, he set
The Son of God ; and added thus in scorn :
"There stand, if thou wilt stand ; to stand upright
Will ask thee skill ; I to thy Father's house
Have brought thee, and highest placed : highest is best :
Now show thy progeny ; if not to stand,
Cast thyself down ; safely, if Son of God :
For it is written, He will give command
Concerning thee to his angels ; in their hands
They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone."
To whom thus Jesus : "Also it is written,
Tempt not the Lord thy God." He said, and stood :
But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell,
As when earth's son, Antæus (to compare
Small things with greatest), in Irassa strove
With Jove's Alcides, and, oft foiled, still rose,
Receiving from his mother Earth new strength,

Fresh from his fall, and fiercer grapple joined,
Throttled at length in the air, expired and fell;
So, after many a foil, the tempter proud,
Renewing fresh assaults, amidst his pride,
Fell whence he stood to see his victor fall:
And as that Theban monster, that proposed
Her riddle, and him who solved it not devoured,
That once found out and solved, for grief and spite
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep;
So, struck with dread and anguish, fell the fiend,
And to his crew, that sat consulting, brought
(Joyless triumphals of his hoped success)
Ruin and desperation and dismay,
Who durst so proudly tempt the Son of God.
So Satan fell; and straight a fiery globe
Of angels on full sail of wing flew nigh,
Who on their plumy vans received him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore,
As on a floating couch, through the blithe air;
Then, in a flowery valley, set him down
On a green bank, and set before him spread
A table of celestial food, divine
Ambrosial fruits, fetched from the tree of life,
And from the fount of life, ambrosial drink,
That soon refreshed him wearied, and repaired

What hunger, if aught hunger, had impaired,
Or thirst; and as he fed, angelic quires
Sung heavenly anthems of his victory
Over temptation and the tempter proud:
"True image of the Father: whether throned
In the bosom of bliss, and light of light
Conceiving, or, remote from heaven, enshrined
In fleshly tabernacle, and human form,
Wandering the wilderness; whatever place,
Habit, or state, or motion, still expressing
The Son of God, with godlike force endued
Against the attempter of Thy Father's throne,
And thief of Paradise! Him long of old
Thou didst debel, and down from heaven cast
With all his army; now thou hast avenged
Supplanted Adam, and, by vanquishing
Temptation, hast regained lost Paradise,
And frustrated the conquest fraudulent.
He never more henceforth will dare set foot
In Paradise to tempt; his snares are broke:
For, though that seat of earthly bliss be failed,
A fairer Paradise is founded now
For Adam and his chosen sons, whom thou,
A Saviour, art come down to reinstall,
Where they shall dwell secure, when time shalt be,

Of tempter and temptation without fear.
But thou, infernal serpent! shalt not long
Rule; in the cloud, like an autumnal star,
Or lightning, thou shalt fall from heaven, trod down
Under his feet: for proof, ere this thou feel'st
Thy wound (yet not thy last and deadliest wound),
By this repulse received, and hold'st in hell
No triumph: in all her gates Abaddon rues
Thy bold attempt. Hereafter learn with awe
To dread the Son of God; he, all unarmed,
Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice
From thy demoniac holds, possession foul,
Thee and thy legions: yelling they shall fly,
And beg to hide them in a herd of swine,
Lest he command them down into the Deep,
Bound, and to torment sent before their time.
Hail, Son of the Most High, heir of both worlds,
Queller of Satan! on thy glorious work
Now enter, and begin to save mankind."

Thus they the Son of God, our Saviour meek,
Sung victor, and, from heavenly feast refreshed,
Brought on his way with joy; he, unobserved,
Home to his mother's house private returned.

SAMSON AGONISTES.

SAMSON AGONISTES:

A DRAMATIC POEM.

THE ARGUMENT.

Samson, made captive, blind, and now in the prison of Gaza, there to labour as in a common workhouse, on a festival day, in a general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit awhile and bemoan his condition: where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father Manoah, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoah then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistine lords for Samson's redemption; who, in the meanwhile, is visited by other persons; and, lastly, by a public officer, to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence: he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him; the Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoah returns full of joyful hope to procure ere long his son's deliverance: in the midst of which discourse a Hebrew comes in haste,

confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly, relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the tragedy ends.

THE PERSONS.

SAMSON.	HARAPHA, of Gath.
MANOAH, the father of Samson.	Public Officer.
DALILA, his wife.	Messenger.
	Chorus of Danites.

The Scene, before the Prison in Gaza.

SAMSON. *Attendant leading him.*

A LITTLE onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade;
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoined me,
Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw
The air imprisoned also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught: but here I feel amends,
The breath of heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon, their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works; unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me; hence with leave

Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease,
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone,
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
O, wherefore was my birth from heaven foretold
Twice by an angel, who at last in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an offering burned,
As in a fiery column charioting
His godlike presence, and from some great act
Or benefit revealed to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed
As of a person separate to God,
Designed for great exploits; if I must die
Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze;
To grind in brazen fetters under task
With this heaven-gifted strength? O glorious strength,
Put to the labour of a beast, debased
Lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;

Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke.
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction; what if all foretold
Had been fulfilled, but through mine own default?
Whom have I to complain of but myself,
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
O'ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body strong!
But what is strength without a double share
Of wisdom? vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtleties; not made to rule,
But to subserve where wisdom bears command.
God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
But peace! I must not quarrel with the will
Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know.
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries:

So many, and so huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail ; but chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain !
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age !
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased,
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm ; the vilest here excel me :
They creep, yet see ; I, dark in light, exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own ;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day !
O first-created beam, and thou great Word,
"Let there be light, and light was over all ;"
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree ?
The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon,
When she deserts the night,
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part; why was this sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confined,
So obvious and so easy to be quenched?
And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,
That she might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried; but, O yet more miserable!
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave:
Buried, yet not exempt,
By privilege of death and burial,
From worst of other evils, pains, and wrongs:
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes.
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear
The tread of many feet steering this way;
Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare
At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,
Their daily practice to afflict me more.

Enter Chorus.

Cho. This, this is he; softly awhile;
Let us not break in upon him.
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,
With languished head unpropt,
As one past hope abandoned,
And by himself given over;
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds,
O'er-worn and soiled;
Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
That heroic, that renowned,
Irresistible Samson? whom, unarmed,
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast, could withstand;
Who tore the lion as the lion tears the kid;
Ran on embattled armies clad in iron;
And, weaponless himself,
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,
Chalybean-tempered steel, and frock of mail
Adamantean proof?
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanced,

In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurned them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
Fled from his lion ramp; old warriors turned
Their plated backs under his heel:
Or, grovelling, soiled their crested helmets in the dust.
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine,
In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day.
Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulders bore,
The gates of Azza, post, and massy bar,
Up to the hill of Hebron, seat of giants old,
No journey of a Sabbath-day, and loaded so;
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up heaven.
Which shall I first bewail—
Thy bondage or lost sight,
Prison within prison
Inseparably dark?
Thou art become, O worst imprisonment!
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain),

Imprisoned now indeed,
In real darkness of the body dwells,
Shut up from outward light
To incorporate with gloomy night;
For inward light, alas!
Puts forth no visual beam.
O mirror of our fickle state!
Since man on earth unparalleled,
The rarer thy example stands,
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.
For him I reckon not in high estate
Whom long descent of birth,
Or the sphere of fortune, raises;
But thee, whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
Might have subdued the earth,
Universally crowned with highest praises.

Sams. I hear the sound of words; their sense the air
Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

Cho. He speaks; let us draw nigh. Matchless in might,
The glory late of Israel, now the grief;

We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown,
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale,
To visit or bewail thee; or, if better,
Counsel or consolation we may bring,
Salve to thy sores; apt words have power to
'ssuage
The tumours of a troubled mind,
And are as balm to festered wounds.

Sams. Your coming, friends, revives me; for I
learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,
How counterfeit a coin they are who friends
Bear in their superscription (of the most,
I would be understood); in prosperous days
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,
Not to be found, though sought. Yet see, O friends,
How many evils have enclosed me round;
Yet that which was the worst, now least afflicts me,
Blindness; for had I sight, confused with shame,
How could I once look up, or heave the head,
Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwrecked
My vessel trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigged; and for a word, a tear,
Fool! have divulged the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman? Tell me, friends,

Am I not sung and proverbed for a fool
In every street? do they not say, How well
Are come upon him his deserts? Yet why?
Immeasurable strength they might behold
In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;
This with the other should at least have paired;
These two, proportioned ill, drove me transverse.

Cho. Tax not divine disposal; wisest men
Have erred, and by bad women been deceived;
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Deject not, then, so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides:
Yet, truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

Sams. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased
Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed
The daughter of an infidel: they knew not
That what I motioned was of God; I knew
From intimate impulse, and therefore urged
The marriage on; that by occasion hence
I might begin Israel's deliverance,
The work to which I was divinely called.
She proving false, the next I took to wife

(O, that I never had! fond wish too late)
Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,
That specious monster, my accomplished snare.
I thought it lawful from my former act,
And the same end; still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressors: of what now I suffer
She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
Who, vanquished with a peal of words (O, weakness!)
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

Cho. In seeking just occasion to provoke
The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
Thou never wast amiss, I bear thee witness:
Yet Israel still serves with all his sons.

Sams. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
On Israel's governors and heads of tribes,
Who, seeing those great acts which God had done
Singly by me against their conquerors,
Acknowledged not, or not at all considered
Deliverance offered: I, on the other side,
Used no ambition to commend my deeds;
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the doer;
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length

Their lords the Philistines with gathered powers
Entered Judea, seeking me, who then
Safe to the rock of Etham was retired;
Not flying, but forecasting in what place
To set upon them, what advantaged best.
Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent
The harass of their land, beset me round;
I willingly on some conditions came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me,
To the uncircumcised a welcome prey,
Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threads
Touched with the flame: on their whole host I flew
Unarmed, and with a trivial weapon felled
Their choicest youth; they only lived who fled.
Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possessed the towers of Gath,
And lorded over them whom they now serve;
But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty—
Bondage with ease, than strenuous liberty;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect,
Whom God hath of his special favour raised
As their deliverer? if he aught begin,

How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?
Cho. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel
Their great deliverer contemned,
The matchless Gideon, in pursuit
Of Madian and her vanquished kings:
And how ingrateful Ephraim
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
Not worse than by his shield and spear,
Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
Had not his prowess quelled their pride
In that sore battle, when so many died
Without reprieve, adjudged to death,
For want of well pronouncing Shibboleth.
Sams. Of such examples add me to the roll;
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But God's proposed deliverance not so.
Cho. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men;
Unless there be who think not God at all:
If any be, they walk obscure;
For of such doctrine never was there school
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
As to his own edicts found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wandering thought,
Regardless of his glory's diminution;
Till, by their own perplexities involved,
They ravel more, still less resolved,
But never find self-satisfying solution.
As if they would confine the Interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript,
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to exempt
Whom so it pleases him by choice
From national obstriction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt;
For with his own laws he can best dispense.
He would not else who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of the enemy just cause,
To set his people free,
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
Against his vow of strictest purity,
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste.
Down, reason, then; at least, vain reasonings down;
Though reason here aver,

That moral verdict quits her of unclean :
Unchaste was subsequent ; her stain, not his.
But see, here comes thy reverend sire
With careful step, locks white as down,
Old Manoah : advise
Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.
Sams. Ay me ! another inward grief, awaked
With mention of that name, renews the assault.

Enter MANOAH.

Man. Brethren, and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
Though in this uncouth place ; if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
My son, now captive, hither hath informed
Your younger feet, while mine, cast back with age,
Came lagging after ; say if he be here.
Cho. As signal now in low dejected state
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.
Man. O miserable change ! is this the man,
That invincible Samson, far renowned,
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to angels', walked their streets,
None offering fight ; who single combatant

Duelled their armies ranked in proud array,
Himself an army, now unequal match
To save himself against a coward armed
At one spear's length? O ever-failing trust
In mortal strength! and, O, what not in man
Deceivable and vain? Nay, what thing good
Prayed for, but often proves our bane?
I prayed for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach; I gained a son,
And such a son as all men hailed me happy;
Who would be now a father in my stead?
O, wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorned?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest prayers, then, given with solemn hand
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind?
For this did the angel twice descend? for this
Ordained thy nurture holy, as of a plant
Select, and sacred, glorious for a while,
The miracle of men; then in an hour
Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
Thy foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves?
Alas! methinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,

He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall
Subject him to so foul indignities,
Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

Sams. Appoint not heavenly disposition, father;
Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me
But justly; I myself have brought them on—
Sole author I, sole cause; if aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned
The mystery of God given me under pledge
Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.
This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,
But warned by oft experience: did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her height
Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,
And rivals? In this other was there found
More faith, who also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
Though offered only, by the scent conceived
Her spurious first-born, treason against me?
Thrice she assayed, with flattering prayers and sighs
And amorous reproaches, to win from me

My capital secret; in what part my strength
Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might
know.
Thrice I deluded her, and turned to sport
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly, and with what impudence
She purposed to betray me (which was worse
Than undissembled hate), with what contempt
She sought to make me traitor to myself;
Yet the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,
With blandished parleys, feminine assaults,
Tongue-batteries, she surceased not day nor night
To storm me over-watched, and wearied out,
At times when men seek most repose and rest,
I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,
Who, with a grain of manhood well resolved,
Might easily have shook off all her snares;
But foul effeminacy held me yoked
Her bond-slave; O indignity, O blot
To honour and religion! servile mind
Rewarded well with servile punishment!
The base degree to which I now am fallen—
These rags, this grinding—is not yet so base
As was my former servitude, ignoble,
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,

True slavery ; and that blindness worse than this,
That saw not how degenerately I served.

Man. I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son—
Rather approved them not ; but thou didst plead
Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
Find some occasion to infest our foes.
I state not that ; this I am sure : our foes
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
Their captive and their triumph ; thou the sooner
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms,
To violate the sacred trust of silence
Deposited within thee ; which to have kept
Tacit, was in thy power : true ; and thou bear'st
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault ;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying,
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains :
This day the Philistines a popular feast
Here celebrate in Gaza ; and proclaim
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud,
To Dagon, as their god, who hath delivered
Thee, Samson, bound and blind into their hands ;
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnified, and God,
Besides whom is no god, compared with idols,
Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn

By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
Of all reproach, the most with shame that ever
Could have befallen thee and thy father's house.

Sams. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
That I this honour, I this pomp, have brought
To Dagon, and advanced his praises high
Among the heathens round: to God have brought
Dishonour, obloquy, and opened the mouths
Of idolists and atheists; have brought scandal
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense enough before
To waver, or fall off and join with idols;
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end: all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presumed,
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive, or linger, thus provoked;
But will arise, and his great name assert:

Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshippers.

Man. With cause this hope relieves thee, and these words
I as a prophecy receive; for God,
Nothing more certain, will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
Thou must not, in the meanwhile here forgot,
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight,
Neglected. I already have made way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ransom: well they may by this
Have satisfied their utmost of revenge
By pains and slaveries, worse than death, inflicted
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

Sams. Spare that proposal, father; spare the trouble
Of that solicitation; let me here,
As I deserve, pay on my punishment;
And expiate, if possible, my crime,

Shameful garrulity. To have revealed
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front! But I
God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret
Presumptuously have published, impiously,
Weakly at least, and shamefully; a sin
That Gentiles in their parables condemn,
To their abyss and horrid pains confined.

Man. Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite;
But act not in thy own affliction, son:
Repent the sin; but, if the punishment
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;
Or the execution leave to high disposal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself: perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;
Who ever more approves, and more accepts
(Best pleased with humble and filial submission),
Him who, imploring mercy, sues for life,
Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due;
Which argues over-just, and self-displeased
For self-offence, more than for God offended.

Reject not, then, what offered means; who knows
But God hath sent before us, to return thee
Home to thy country and his sacred house,
Where thou mayst bring thy offerings, to avert
His further ire, with prayers and vows renewed?

Sams. His pardon I implore; but as for life,
To what end should I seek it? When in strength
All mortals I excelled, and great in hopes
With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from Heaven foretold, and high exploits,
Full of divine instinct, after some proof
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
The sons of Anak, famous now and blazed,
Fearless of danger, like a petty god
I walked about admired of all, and dreaded
On hostile ground, none daring my affront;
Then, swollen with pride, into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
Softened with pleasure and voluptuous life,
At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me
Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,
Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,
Shaven, and disarmed among my enemies.

Cho. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
Which many a famous warrior overturns,
Thou couldst repress ; nor did the dancing ruby
Sparkling, out-poured, the flavour, or the smell,
Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men,
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

Sams. Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
With touch ethereal of heaven's fiery rod,
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
Thirst, and refreshed : nor envied them the grape
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

Cho. O madness, to think use of strongest wines,
And strongest drinks, our chief support of health,
When God, with these forbidden, made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook !

Sams. But what availed this temperance, not complete
Against another object more enticing ?
What boots it at one gate to make defence,
And at another to let in the foe,
Effeminately vanquished ? by which means,

Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonoured, quelled,
To what can I be useful, wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed,
But to sit idle on the household hearth,
A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze
Or pitied object; these redundant locks,
Robustious to no purpose, clustering down,
Vain monument of strength; till length of years
And sedentary numbness craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obscure?
Here rather let me drudge, and earn my bread:
Till vermin or the draff of servile food
Consume me, and oft-invocated death
Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

Man. Wilt thou, then, serve the Philistines with that gift
Which was expressly given thee to annoy them?
Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
Inglorious, unemployed, with age outworn.
But God, who caused a fountain at thy prayer
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay
After the brunt of battle, can as easy
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast:

And I persuade me so; why else this strength
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
His might continues in thee not for nought,
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

Sams. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
Nor the other light of life continue long,
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:
So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
My hopes all flat, nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself;
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

Man. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
From anguish of the mind and humours black,
That mingle with thy fancy. I, however,
Must not omit a father's timely care
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
By ransom, or how else: meanwhile be calm,
And healing words from these thy friends admit.

[*Exit*

Sams. O, that torment should not be confined
To the body's wounds and sores,
With maladies innumerable

In heart, head, breast, and reins ;
But must secret passage find
To the inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense.
My griefs not only pain me
As a lingering disease,
But, finding no redress, ferment and rage ;
Nor less than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
To black mortification.
Thoughts, my tormentors, armed with deadly stings,
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure ;
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heaven's desertion.

I was his nurseling once and choice delight,
His destined from the womb,
Promised by heavenly message twice descending.
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up, and thrived amain;
He led me on to mightiest deeds,
Above the nerve of mortal arm,
Against the uncircumcised, our enemies:
But now hath cast me off as never known,
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provoked,
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable loss
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless:
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
No long petition—speedy death,
The close of all my miseries, and the balm.

Cho. Many are the sayings of the wise,
In ancient and in modern books enrolled,
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude;
And to the bearing well of all calamities,
All chances incident to man's frail life,
Consolatories writ

With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,
Lenient of grief and anxious thought:
But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint:
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above,
Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,
And fainting spirits uphold.
God of our fathers! what is man
That thou towards him with hand so various
(Or, might I say, contrarious?)
Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly, as thou rulest
The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute?
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That, wandering loose about,
Grow up and perish, as the summer fly,
Heads without name, no more remembered;
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorned,
To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect:

Yet toward these thus dignified, thou oft,
Amidst their height of noon,
Changest thy countenance and thy hand, with no
regard
Of highest favours past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.
Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscured, which were a fair dismission,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt
them high;
Unseemly falls in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission;
Oft leavest them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived;
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
If these they scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deformed,
In crude old age;
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering,
The punishment of dissolute days: in fine,
Just or unjust, alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.
But who is this, what thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems,
That so bedecked, ornate, and gay,
Comes this way sailing
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus, bound for the isles
Of Javan or Gadier,
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails filled, and streamers waving,
Courted by all the winds that hold them play,
An amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind:
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem;
And now, at nearer view, no other certain
Than Dalila thy wife.

Sams. My wife! my traitress; let her not come near me.

Cho. Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee fixed,
About to have spoke; but now, with head declined,

Like a fair flower surcharged with dew, she weeps,
And words addressed seem into tears dissolved,
Wetting the borders of her silken veil:
But now again she makes address to speak.

Enter DALILA.

Dal. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson;
Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge; yet, if tears
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverse event than I foresaw),
My penance hath not slackened, though my pardon
No way assured. But conjugal affection,
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,
Hath led me on, desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
If aught in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou sufferest, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash, but more unfortunate misdeed.

Sams. Out, out, hyæna! these are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman false like thee,

To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then as repentant to submit, beseech,
And reconcilement move with feigned remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change;
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail:
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits;
That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,
With goodness principled not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangled with a poisonous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.

Dal. Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour
To lessen or extenuate my offence;
But that, on the other side, if it be weighed
By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,
Or else with just allowance counterpoised,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,

Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them, both common female faults:
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is, for nought,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?
To what I did thou shew'dst me first the way.
But I to enemies revealed, and should not:
Nor shouldst thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness, then, with weakness come to parle,
So near related; or the same of kind,
Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,
The jealousy of love, powerful of sway
In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
Caused what I did? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy, feared lest one day thou wouldst leave me
As her at Timna, sought by all means therefore
How to endure, and hold thee to me firmest;
No better way I saw than by importuning
To learn thy secrets, get into my power

Thy key of strength and safety. Thou wilt say,
Why then revealed? I was assured by those
Who tempted me, that nothing was designed
Against thee but safe custody, and hold:
That made for me; I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
Wailing thy absence in my widowed bed;
Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,
Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love.
These reasons in love's law have passed for good,
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps:
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.
Be not unlike all others, not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.

Sams. How cunningly the sorceress displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!
That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither,
By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, the example,

I led the way; bitter reproach, but true;
I to myself was false, ere thou to me:
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
Take to thy wicked deed; which when thou seest
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
Confess it feigned. Weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it; weakness to resist
Philistian gold: if weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
With God or man will gain thee no remission.
But love constrained thee; call it furious rage
To satisfy thy lust: love seeks to have love;
My love how couldst thou hope, who took'st the way
To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed?
In vain thou strivest to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

Dal. Since thou determinest weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,

What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;
Which might have awed the best-resolved of men,
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
That wrought with me: thou know'st the magistrates
And princes of my country came in person,
Solicited, commanded, threatened, urged,
Adjured, by all the bonds of civil duty
And of religion, pressed how just it was,
How honourable, how glorious, to entrap
A common enemy, who had destroyed
Such numbers of our nation: and the priest
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious
Dishonourer of Dagon: what had I
To oppose against such powerful arguments?
Only my love of thee held long debate,
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contest: at length that grounded maxim,
So rife and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men, that to the public good
Private respects must yield, with grave authority

Took full possession of me, and prevailed ;
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining.
Sams. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end :
In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy !
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I, before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation, chose thee from among
My enemies, loved thee, as too well thou knew'st ;
Too well ; unbosomed all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but overpowered
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing ;
Yet now am judged an enemy. Why, then,
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband,
Then, as since then, thy country's foe professed ?
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country ; nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection, but my own ;
Thou mine, not theirs : if aught against my life
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
Against the law of Nature, law of nations ;
No more thy country, but an impious crew

Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
For which our country is a name so dear;
Not therefore to be obeyed. But zeal moved thee;
To please thy gods thou didst it. Gods unable
To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own deity, gods cannot be;
Less therefore to be pleased, obeyed, or feared.
These false pretexts and varnished colours, failing,
Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear?

Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

Sams. For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath;
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.

Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson;
Afford me place to show what recompense
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided; only what remains past cure
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
To afflict thyself in vain: though sight be lost,

Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed
Where other senses want not their delights
At home in leisure and domestic ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance, to which
Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathsome prison-house to abide
With me, where my redoubled love and care,
With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
May ever tend about thee to old age,
With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied,
That what by me thou hast lost, thou least shalt miss.

Sams. No, no; of my condition take no care;
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain:
Nor think me so unwary or accursed,
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught: I know thy trains,
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils;
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms,
No more on me have power; their force is nulled;
So much of adder's wisdom I have learned,
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.

If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
Loved, honoured, feared me, thou alone couldst hate me
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forego me;
How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child
Helpless, thence easily contemned and scorned,
And last neglected? how wouldst thou insult,
When I must live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thraldom? how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile?
This jail I count the house of liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

Dal. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

Sams. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee; go with that;
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives!
Cherish thy hastened widowhood with the gold

Of matrimonial treason ! so farewell.

Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To prayers than winds and seas ; yet winds to seas
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore :
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest, never to be calmed.
Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate ;
Bid go with evil omen, and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounced ?
To mix with thy concernments I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame, if not double-faced, is double-mouthed,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds ;
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild aëry flight.
My name perhaps among the circumcised
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defamed,
With malediction mentioned, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced.
But in my country, where I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,
I shall be named among the famousest

Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who, to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
Above the faith of wedlock bands; my tomb
With odours visited and annual flowers;
Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim
Jael, who with inhospitable guile
Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nailed.
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
The public marks of honour and reward,
Conferred upon me for the piety,
Which to my country I was judged to have
shewn.
At this whoever envies or repines,
I leave him to his lot, and like my own. [*Exit.*

Cho. She's gone, a manifest serpent by her
sting,
Discovered in the end, till now concealed.

Sams. So let her go; God sent her to debase me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

Cho. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange
power,
After offence returning, to regain

Love once possessed, nor can be easily
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt,
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

Sams. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,
Not wedlock treachery endangering life.

Cho. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
That woman's love can win, or long inherit;
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit
(Which way soever men refer it),
Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
Or seven, though one should musing sit.

If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferred
Thy paranymph, worthless to thee compared,
Successor in thy bed,
Nor both so loosely disallied
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that such outward ornament
Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinished, judgment scant,
Capacity not raised to apprehend
Or value what is best

In choice, but oftest to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of self-love mixed,
Of constancy no root infixed,
That either they love nothing, or not long?
  Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once joined, the contrary she proves, a thorn
Intestine, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent; or by her charms
Draws him awry enslaved
With dotage, and his sense depraved
To folly and shameful deeds, which ruin ends.
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck,
Embarked with such a steers-mate at the helm?
  Favoured of Heaven, who finds
One virtuous, rarely found,
That in domestic good combines;
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
But virtue, which breaks through all opposition,
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines, and most is acceptable above.
  Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic power

Over his female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile she or lour:
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not swayed
By female usurpation, or dismayed.
But had we best retire? I see a storm.

Sams. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

Cho. But this another kind of tempest brings.

Sams. Be less abstruse; my riddling days are past.

Cho. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honeyed words; a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward; I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
Haughty, as is his pile high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither
I less conjecture, than when first I saw
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way:
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

Sams. Or peace, or not, alike to me he comes.

Cho. His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.

Enter HARAPHA.

Har. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath,
Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old
That Kiriathaim held; thou know'st me now
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might and feats performed,
Incredible to me, in this displeased,
That I was never present on the place
Of those encounters, where we might have tried
Each other's force in camp or listed field;
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walked about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report.

Sams. The way to know were not to see, but taste.

Har. Dost thou already single me? I thought
Gyves and the mill had tamed thee. O, that fortune
Had brought me to the field, where thou art famed

To have wrought such wonders with an ass's
jaw!
I should have forced thee soon with other arms,
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown:
So had the glory of prowess been recovered
To Palestine, won by a Philistine,
From the unforeskinned race, of whom thou bear'st
The highest name for valiant acts; that honour,
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

Sams. Boast not of what thou wouldst have
done, but do
What then thou wouldst; thou seest it in thy
hand.

Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain,
And thou hast need much washing to be touched.

Sams. Such usage as your honourable lords
Afford me, assassinated and betrayed,
Who durst not with their whole united powers
In fight withstand me single and unarmed,
Nor in the house with chamber-ambushes
Close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping,
Till they had hired a woman with their gold,
Breaking her marriage-faith, to circumvent me.
Therefore, without feigned shifts, let be assigned

Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give thee,
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;
And put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon,
Vant-brace and greaves, and gauntlet, add thy spear,
A weaver's beam, and seven times folded shield;
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
And raise such outcries on thy clattered iron,
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
That in a little time, while breath remains thee,
Thou oft shall wish thyself at Gath, to boast
Again in safety what thou wouldst have done
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms,
Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,
Their ornament and safety, had not spells
And black enchantments, some magician's art,
Armed thee or charmed thee strong, which thou from heaven
Feignedst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,

Where strength can least abide, though all thy
hairs
Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back
Of chafed wild boars, or ruffled porcupines.
Sams. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;
My trust is in the living God, who gave me
At my nativity this strength, diffused
No less through all my sinews, joints, and bones,
Than thine, while I preserved these locks un-
shorn,
The pledge of my unviolated vow.
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
Go to his temple, invocate his aid
With solemnest devotion, spread before him
How highly it concerns his glory now
To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
Which I to be the power of Israel's God
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
Offering to combat thee his champion bold,
With the utmost of his godhead seconded:
Then thou shalt see, or rather, to thy sorrow,
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.
Har. Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be;
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people, and delivered up

Into thy enemies' hand, permitted them
To put out both thine eyes, and, fettered, send thee
Into the common prison, there to grind
Among the slaves and asses thy comrades,
As good for nothing else; no better service
With those thy boisterous locks, no worthy match
For valour to assail, nor by the sword
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,
But by the barber's razor best subdued.

Sams. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve, and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant:
In confidence whereof I once again
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whose god is God,
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

Har. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause,
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber!

Sams. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove me these?

Har. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
Their magistrates confessed it when they took thee
As a league-breaker, and delivered bound
Into our hands; for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
Then like a robber stripp'dst them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with the armed powers thee only seeking,
To others did no violence nor spoil.

Sams. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe;
And in your city held my nuptial feast:
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who threatening cruel death, constrained the bride
To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,
That solved the riddle which I had proposed.
When I perceived all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, wherever chanced,
I used hostility, and took their spoil,
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords;
It was the force of conquest; force with force

Is well ejected when the conquered can.
But I, a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presumed
Single rebellion, and did hostile acts.
I was no private, but a person raised
With strength sufficient, and command from Heaven,
To free my country; if their servile minds
Me, their deliverer sent, would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for naught,
The unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heaven assigned,
And had performed it, if my known offence
Had not disabled me, not all your force:
These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant,
Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts,
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

Har. With thee? a man condemned, a slave enrolled,
Due by the law to capital punishment?
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

Sams. Camest thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,

To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
Come nearer; part not hence so slight informed;
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.
Har. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unused
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?
Sams. No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van,
My heels are fettered, but my fist is free.
Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.
Sams. Go, baffled coward! lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down,
To the hazard of thy brains, and shattered sides.
Har. By Astaroth, ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries, in irons loaded on thee. [*Exit.*
Cho. His giantship is gone somewhat crestfallen,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.
Sams. I dread him not, nor all his giant brood,
Though fame divulge him father of five sons,
All of gigantic size, Goliah chief.
Cho. He will directly to the lords, I fear,

And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.

Sams. He must allege some cause, and offered fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not:
And, that he durst not, plain enough appeared:
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;
If they intend advantage of my labours,
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence;
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

Cho. O, how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppressed,
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support

Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous, and all such as honour truth
He all their ammunition
And feats of war defeats,
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigour armed;
Their armouries and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless; while
With wingéd expedition,
Swift as the lightning glance, he executes
His errand on the wicked, who, surprised,
Lose their defence, distracted and amazed.
  But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endued
Above the sons of men; but sight bereaved
May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown.
  This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Labouring thy mind

More than the working day thy hands,
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind,
For I descry this way
Some other tending; in his hand
A sceptre or quaint staff he bears,
Comes on amain, speed in his look.
By his habit I discern him now
A public officer, and now at hand;
His message will be short and voluble.

Enter OFFICER.

Off. Hebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.
Cho. His manacles remark him; there he sits.
Off. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say:
This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games;
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
And now some public proof thereof require
To honour this great feast, and great assembly:
Rise therefore with all speed and come along,
Where I will see thee heartened, and fresh clad,
To appear as fits before the illustrious lords.
Sams. Thou know'st I am a Hebrew, therefore tell them
Our law forbids at their religious rites

My presence; for that cause I cannot come.

Off. This answer, be assured, will not content them.

Sams. Have they not sword-players, and every sort

Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
Jugglers, and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,
But they must pick me out, with shackles tired,
And over-laboured at their public mill,
To make them sport with blind activity?
Do they not seek occasion for new quarrels,
On my refusal to distress me more,
Or make a game of my calamities?
Return the way thou camest, I will not come.

Off. Regard thyself; this will offend them highly.

Sams. Myself? My conscience, and internal peace.

Can they think me so broken, so debased
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
Will condescend to such absurd commands;
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
And in my midst of sorrow and heart grief
To show them feats, and play before their god,
The worst of all indignities, yet on me
Joined with extreme contempt? I will not come.

Off. My message was imposed on me with speed,
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

Sams. So take it with what speed thy message needs.

Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

[*Exit.*

Sams. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

Cho. Consider, Samson; matters now are strained
Up to the height, whether to hold or break:
He's gone, and who knows how he may report
Thy words, by adding fuel to the flame?
Expect another message, more imperious,
More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.

Sams. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair
After my great transgression, so requite
Favour renewed, and add a greater sin
By prostituting holy things to idols?
A Nazarite in place abominable
Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon!
Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous!
What act more execrably unclean, profane?

Cho. Yet with this strength thou servest the Philistines,

Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean.

Sams. Not in their idol worship, but by labour
Honest and lawful to deserve my food
Of those who have me in their civil power.

Cho. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.

Sams. Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds;
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon,
Not dragging? The Philistian lords command:
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, venturing to displease
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
Set God behind: which in his jealousy
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
Yet, that he may dispense with me, or thee,
Present in temples at idolatrous rites
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

Cho. How thou wilt here come off, surmounts my reach.

Sams. Be of good courage; I begin to feel
Some rousing motions in me, which dispose
To something extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this messenger will go along,
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour

Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite :
If there be aught of presage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last.

Cho. In time thou hast resolved, the man returns.

Off. Samson, this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say.—Art thou our slave,
Our captive at the public mill, our drudge,
And darest thou, at our sending and command,
Dispute thy coming? come without delay ;
Or we shall find such engines to assail
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
Though thou wert firmlier fastened than a rock.

Sams. I could be well content to try their art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
Yet, knowing their advantages too many,
Because they shall not trail me through their streets
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters' commands come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection,
And for a life who will not change his purpose?
(So mutable are all the ways of men!)
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
Scandalous or forbidden in our law.

Off. I praise thy resolution ; doff these links ;

By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.
Sams. Brethren, farewell; your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
To see me girt with friends; and how the sight
Of me, as of a common enemy,
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them,
I know not: lords are lordliest in their wine;
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired
With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned;
No less the people on their holy-days
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable:
Happen what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our law, my nation, or myself;
The last of me or no, I cannot warrant. [*Exit.*
Cho. Go, and the Holy One
Of Israel be thy guide
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
Great among the heathen round;
Send thee the angel of thy birth, to stand
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
Rode up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield

Of fire; that spirit, that first rushed on thee
In the camp of Dan,
Be efficacious in thee now at need!
For never was from Heaven imparted
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen.
But wherefore comes old Manoah in such haste
With youthful steps? much livelier than erewhile
He seems; supposing here to find his son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news.

Enter MANOAH.

Man. Peace with you, brethren: my inducement hither
Was not at present here to find my son,
By order of the lords now parted hence
To come and play before them at their feast.
I heard all as I came, the city rings,
And numbers thither flock: I had no will,
Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.
But that, which moved my coming now, was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.

Cho. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
With thee: say, reverend sire, we thirst to hear.

Man. I have attempted one by one the lords
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
With supplication prone and father's tears,
To accept of ransom for my son their prisoner.
Some much averse I found, and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
That part most reverenced Dagon and his priests:
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
Private reward, for which both god and state
They easily would set to sale: a third
More generous far and civil, who confessed
They had enough revenged; having reduced
Their foe to misery beneath their fears,
The rest was magnanimity to remit,
If some convenient ransom were proposed—
What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky.

Cho. Doubtless, the people shouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And numbered down: much rather I shall choose
Too live the poorest in my tribe; than richest,
And he in that calamitous prison left.

No, I am fixed, not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forego
And quit: not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

Cho. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all:
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age,
Thou in old age carest how to nurse thy son,
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in his house, ennobled
With all those high exploits by him achieved,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks
That of a nation armed the strength contained;
And I persuade me, God hath not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair,
Garrisoned round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
To use him further yet in some great service;
Not to sit idle with so great a gift
Useless, and thence ridiculous, about him.
And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

Cho. Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem vain
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon

Conceived, agreeable to a father's love,
In both which we, as next, participate.
Man. I know your friendly minds, and—O,
what noise!
Mercy of Heaven, what hideous noise was that?
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.
Cho. Noise call you it, or universal groan,
As if the whole inhabitation perished!
Blood, death, and deathful deeds, are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.
Man. Of ruin, indeed, methought I heard the
noise:
Oh! it continues; they have slain my son.
Cho. Thy son is rather slaying them: that out-
cry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.
Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be;
What shall we do, stay here, or run and see?
Cho. Best keep together here, lest, running
thither,
We unawares run into danger's mouth.
This evil on the Philistines is fallen:
From whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here;
From other hands we need not much to fear.

What if, his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way?

Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

Cho. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old; what hinders now?

Man. He can, I know, but doubt to think he will;
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief,
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

Cho. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.
And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
A Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.

Enter MESSENGER.

Mess. O, whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle,
Which erst my eyes beheld, and yet behold!
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But Providence or instinct of nature seems,
Or reason, though disturbed, and scarce consulted,
To have guided me aright, I know not how,

To thee first, reverend Manoah, and to these
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror,
Though in the sad event too much concerned.

Man. The accident was loud, and here before thee
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not;
No preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

Mess. It would burst forth, but I recover breath
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

Man. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

Mess. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fallen,
All in a moment overwhelmed and fallen.

Man. Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest
The desolation of a hostile city.

Mess. Feed on that first: there may in grief be surfeit.

Man. Relate by whom.

Mess. By Samson.

Man. That still lessens
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

Mess. Ah! Manoah, I refrain too suddenly

To utter what will come at last too soon;
Lest evil tidings with too rude irruption
Hitting thy aged ear, should pierce too deep.

Man. Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

Mess. Take then the worst in brief: Samson is dead.

Man. The worst indeed! O, all my hopes defeated
To free him hence! but death, who sets all free,
Hath paid his ransom now, and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceived
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring,
Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost!
Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first,
How died he? death to life is crown or shame.
All by him fell, thou say'st; by whom fell he?
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?

Mess. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

Man. Wearied with slaughter then, or how? explain.

Mess. By his own hands.

Man. Self-violence? what cause

Brought him so soon at variance with himself
Among his foes?
Mess. Inevitable cause
At once both to destroy, and be destroyed;
The edifice, where all were met to see him,
Upon their heads and on his own he pulled.
Man. O, lastly over-strong against thyself!
A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know; but while things yet
Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
Relation more particular and distinct.
Mess. Occasions drew me early to this city;
And, as the gates I entered with sun-rise,
The morning trumpets festival proclaimed
Through each high street: little I had dispatched,
When all abroad had rumoured that this day
Samson should be brought forth, to show the people
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games;
I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded
Not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theatre
Half round, on two main pillars vaulted high,
With seats where all the lords, and each degree

Of sort, might sit in order to behold;
The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand;
I among these aloof obscurely stood.
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
When to their sports they turned. Immediately
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In their state livery clad; before him pipes
And timbrels; on each side went armed guards,
Both horse and foot; before him and behind,
Archers and slingers, cataphracts and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout
Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He, patient, but undaunted, where they led him,
Came to the place; and what was set before him,
Which without help of eye might be assayed,
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed
All with incredible, stupendous force;
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length for intermission's sake they led him
Between the pillars; he his guide requested
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard)

As over-tired to let him lean awhile
With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
That to the archéd roof gave main support.
He, unsuspicious, led him ; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head awhile inclined,
And eyes fast fixed, he stood, as one who prayed,
Or some great matter in his mind revolved :
At last with head erect thus cried aloud,—
"Hitherto, lords, what your commands imposed
I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
Not without wonder or delight beheld :
Now of my own accord such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater
As with amaze shall strike all who behold."
This uttered, straining all his nerves, he bowed :
As with the force of winds and waters pent,
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugged, he shook, till down they came, and drew
The whole roof after them with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
Their choice nobility and flower, not only

Of this, but each Philistian city round,
Met from all parts to solemnise this feast.
Samson, with these immixed, inevitably
Pulled down the same destruction on himself;
The vulgar only 'scaped, who stood without.

Cho. O dearly bought revenge, yet glorious!
Living or dying thou hast fulfilled
The work for which thou wast foretold
To Israel, and now liest victorious
Among thy slain, self-killed,
Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoined
Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in number more
Than all thy life hath slain before.

1 *Semicho.* While their hearts were jocund and sublime
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,
Chanting their idol and preferring
Before our Living Dread, who dwells
In Silo, his bright sanctuary;
Among them he a spirit of frenzy sent
Who hurt their minds,
And urged them on with mad desire,
To call in haste for their destroyer;

They, only set on sport and play,
Unweetingly importuned
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men,
Fallen into wrath divine,
As their own ruin on themselves to invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate
And with blindness internal struck.

2 *Semicho.* But he, though blind of sight,
Despised, and thought extinguished quite,
With inward eyes illuminated,
His fiery virtue roused
From under ashes into sudden flame
And as an evening dragon came,
Assailant on the perchéd roosts
And nests in order ranged
Of tame villatic fowl ; but as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So virtue, given for lost,
Depressed, and overthrown, as seemed,
Like that self-begotten bird
In the Arabian woods embost,
That no second knows, nor third,
And lay erewhile a holocaust,
From out her ashy womb now teemed,

Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
When most unactive deemed;
And, though her body die, her fame survives
A secular bird ages of lives.

Man. Come, come; no time for lamentation now,
Nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroicly hath finished
A life heroic, on his enemies
Fully revenged; hath left them years of mourning,
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor
Through all Philistian bounds, to Israel
Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;
To himself and father's house eternal fame;
And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was feared,
But favouring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies
Soaked in his enemies' blood; and from the stream,

With lavers pure, and cleansing herbs, wash off
The clotted gore. I, with what speed the while
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay),
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends,
To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend
With silent obsequy, and funeral train,
Home to his father's house: there will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade,
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts
To matchless valour, and adventures high:
The virgins also shall, on feastful days,
Visit his tomb with flowers; only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

Cho. All is best, though we oft doubt
What the unsearchable dispose
Of Highest Wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns,

And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns,
And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent:
His servants he, with new acquist
Of true experience, from this great event,
With peace and consolation hath dismissed,
And calm of mind, all passion spent.

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